

THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF ASIAN AMERICANS
IN THE EARLY 1990S

BY

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Defying the image of success, the participation of Asian Americans in the U.S. electoral process is extremely limited. What explains the participation patterns of individuals with Asian ancestry in voting and election-related activities other than voting? Using two sets of recent survey data collected in southern California, the study examines the meanings of being Asian in political participation at three levels--across panethnic groups, inside the multi-ethnic Asian group, and within a specific Asian nationality group. The results confirm previous findings that, compared to other major ethnic groups, Asian ethnicity as indicated by objective culture background depresses participation. Despite controls over several sets of factors commonly related to the political participation of mainstream and minority groups, being Asian means less

politically active. Yet, within the Asian sample, one's national origin usually has no independent impact on the likelihood or extent of participation.

When the meaning of being Asian is measured with subjective socio-psychological factors underlying the construction of ethnic identity, the results reveal a different dimension of the relationship between ethnicity and political participation. The concept of ethnicity cast either at the panethnic or specific nationality group level, first of all, involves a multi-faceted process that can be manifested in such components as group consciousness, cultural and social integration, and ethnic attachment. Second, being more identified with the panethnic or specific Asian group can increase participation. Although insufficient to compensate for the participation disparity between Asians and Anglo whites, indicators of subjective identity are most useful of all models to explain turnout or other participation among Asians. Third, for a group of foreign-born Korean Americans, however, length of stay best predicts political integration. For Koreans, the different impact of being a victim of hate crimes in the two surveys conducted before and after the Rodney King riot also highlights the importance of socio-political context in shaping the impact of ethnicity on participation.

The study concludes by discussing the meaning of voting participation for Asians as well as the roles of political

parties, interest groups, and media in the mobilization of Asians into American politics.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Current Status: A Two-Tiered Picture

Asian Pacific Americans (Asians hereafter) have a long history of immigration to the United States which not only does not dissipate over time but has accelerated in recent decades due to changes in U. S. immigration laws and economic, social, and political conditions within and outside of the country (Reimers 1985; Chan 1991; Hing 1993). The 1990 Census provides one of the strongest evidences of the Asian emergence; the Asian Pacific population rose from 3.5 million to 7.3 million over the decade, with about 71% of the growth coming from immigration. The Asian rate of increase in the decennial census--108% or about twice that of Latinos, six times that of blacks, and 20 times that of non-Hispanic whites--made Asians the fastest growing minority group between 1980 and 1990. In five states (Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Vermont), the population of Asians has equaled or outnumbered Latinos and blacks combined. And it has been projected that, if the current rate of growth holds--which is a likely scenario short of a major change in immigration policy and global political economy, Asians will comprise about one-tenth of the nation's population by 2050. In an electoral democracy

where numbers count, the explosive increase in group size may promise a great boost to the group's political leverage.

Moreover, the phenomenal growth in population has been accompanied by what looks like a remarkably high level of socio-economic achievement. For instance, in March 1991, among persons of 25 and over, the percentage of Asians with four or more years of college (40%) was almost twice the proportion for whites (23%); their median family income of \$42,250 was \$5,300 higher than that earned by all of the white families¹ (Bennett 1992). Most studies on American political participation often emphasize the defining impact of socioeconomic status--especially the role of education (Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Conway 1991a). Judging from the high scores in education and family income, Americans of Asian origin would be expected to have high rates of participation in American politics.

In California, a state which accounts for 40% of the nation's Asians, and in Los Angeles County and its vicinity, home to the largest settlement of Asians in the mainland, the story of boom and prosperity is familiar. From 1980 to 1990, the state's Asian population grew from 1.3 million to 2.8 million (+127%), and it is projected that by 2020, Asians in California will number 8.5 million or be about 20% of the state's population (Ong and Hee 1993). The percentage of persons 25 or over that have at least a

bachelor's degree was higher for Asians (34%) than for non-Hispanic whites (28%) in 1990. The Asian median family income (\$39,769) in 1989 was slightly higher than that for the non-Hispanic whites (\$39,032). In Los Angeles County, home to one-third of the state's Asian population, Asians again surpassed all whites in the percentage of those with higher education or family income.² And some have not been keeping the wealth just for themselves.

A few studies reported that the Asian American community has been donating funds to political campaigns in much greater proportion than their numbers. Lew (1987) observed that whereas Asian Americans might constitute for one-tenth of the population in California, they often contributed to about 20-30% of a candidate's campaign fund. This figure was much higher for contributions made to Asian candidates. Tachibana (1986) reported, for example, that 75% of March Fong Eu's campaign money and 70% of Delaware Lieutenant Governor S. B. Woo's fund-raising coffer came from Asian contributors. Because of the demonstrated financial strength, major political candidates now campaign in Asian American neighborhoods, headlining Asian American concerns (Espiritu 1992, 61-65). And the financial contributions received by the national campaigns have been remarkable. Nakanishi (1991) reported that, in 1988, both George Bush and Michael Dukakis received a total of over \$10 million dollars from the Asian American community, making it

second only to the American Jewish community in terms of the amount of campaign money raised by an ethnic or minority group.

These figures help to support the "model minority" stereotype established first by the media in the wake of the Civil Rights Era when the nation was enjoying a relative economic prosperity.³ Yet the current state of Asian Americans is a controversial issue. There is no question that the status of Asians has drastically improved since the 19th century and the earlier part of this century when formal and blatant discrimination and exploitation were the norm of practice (Kitano and Daniels 1988; Chan 1991; Feagin and Feagin 1993). Relative to other minority or even majority groups, Asians in the aggregate have clearly experienced a remarkable degree of economic success (Ong and Hee 1994). There is also little doubt that the election and appointment of Asians to federal, state, and local positions in recent years have become less novel and they have become viable participants in many small mainland cities such as Gardena and Monterey Park in California, Mesa in Arizona, West Windsor in New Jersey, or even, to a much lesser extent, major urban areas such as Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, and New York (Nakanishi 1985-1986; Tachibana 1986; Erie and Brackman 1993; and numerous reports in ethnic media such as *Asian Week* and *World Journal*). If naturalization is an indicator of one's desire to become

integrated into the American system, scholars concur that Asians at the aggregate have the strongest commitment to do so. In the last three decades, Asian immigrants petitioned to become American citizens much earlier and at a higher rate than their counterparts from any other part of the world (Barkan 1983; Portes and Mozo 1985; Portes and Rumbaut 1990). And, to speed up the new citizens' process of involvement in electoral politics, community organizations and political parties have launched voter registration drives and hired Asian recruiters in major urban areas in California, Illinois, New York, and Texas (Espiritu 1992). But those who expect to see a corresponding growth of Asian participation in the American political power structure have so far been mostly disappointed.

In terms of officeholding, except in Hawaii,⁴ there have only been a handful of Asians--mainly of Chinese or Japanese descent and from California--who were able to hold elected positions at higher levels of governments (Espiritu 1992). Among the nine Asian members in the current U.S. Congress, for instance, three are from California. Results of the 1990 Bureau of Census Civilian Labor Force data (Equal Employment Opportunity File) revealed that only 1.4% of all legislators surveyed in the nation were Asians.⁵ At the local level, a 1987 Census of Governments reported that less than .5% of all elected officials were Asians (1988). An analysis using the 1991 "Form of Government" Survey

indicated that only .2% of the nation's city council members or mayors are of Asian ethnicity (MacManus and Bullock 1993). Federal appointed offices have also been inaccessible. In early 1990s, only 45 of the 8,200 staff positions in Congress were held by Asians (Feagin and Feagin 1993).

In California, after the mid-1960s and throughout the 1970s, there were usually two or three Asians seated in the state legislature. This did not happen in the entire decade of the 1980s, leaving Secretary of State March Fong Eu (1974-1994) the lone Asian in an elected position at the state level until the election of Nao Taksugi to the State Assembly in 1992.⁶ Similar fluctuation existed at the local level. For instance, a strong Chinese American incumbent on the city council of Monterey Park (pop. 60,000, 57% Asian) was defeated in his reelection bid in April 1994, along with two other aspirants of Chinese origin, amidst reported fear of an Asian majority in the city council where two of the five seats have been served by Asians since 1992.⁷ In early 1990s, in a state where one out of ten residents were Asians, only 2% of the state's top elected officials could claim their origin as Asians; only three out of the state's 53-member delegation to Congress were Asian; and only 1% of city council and school board seats were held by Asians (Efron 1990). Even the highest ratio of political representation found in the 1990 Census EEO File--4.4% of

all legislators in California--pales when compared to the group's 9.6% share of population in the state.

The lack of elected or appointed Asian officials is mirrored by the low levels of voter registration and turnout by the Asian public. A 1984 analysis of the voter registration lists for three areas of high Asian concentration in San Francisco revealed that people with Chinese and Japanese American surnames registered to vote at far lower levels (31% and 37%, respectively) than the 60% registration rate found among the general electorate (Din 1984). Similar findings were reported in a Los Angeles study where 43% of all Japanese were registered, followed by 36% of Chinese, 27% of Filipinos, 17% of Asian Indians, 13% of Koreans, and 4% of Vietnamese (Nakanishi 1985-1986). In the city of Monterey Park, Asian Americans' overall rate of registration was 29% in 1984 and 39% in 1989; the increase was mostly accounted for by new Chinese registrants (Nakanishi 1991). Across the state, a California ethnicity survey found that Asians registered at 55% and voted at 48% in 1984; these rates were about 30% lower than those for non-Hispanic whites and blacks (Uhlauer, Cain, and Kiewiet 1989). In June 1990 primary, Asian Americans' registration rate of 39% was found to be the lowest among the four major groups in California (Field Institute 1990). In the 1992 presidential election, a *Los Angeles Times* exit poll indicated that the Asian percentage of the state-wide vote

share was a dismal 3%, despite the group's 7% share of adult citizens. The situation appeared not to change much in the 1993 mayoral race of Los Angeles where the Democratic candidate was an Asian (Michael Woo). Despite their 11% share of the city's voting-age population, Asians accounted for only 4% of the votes (Skelton 1993).

Perhaps by far the most accurate estimation of the Asian electoral participation is the figures reported for the first time by Current Population Survey (CPS) for the 1992 national election (Appendix A). Of the entire Asian population age 18 or over in the nation, only 31% were registered to vote and 27% actually turned out at the polls. A major reason for the lack of participation may be that only about half of the adult population were citizens. When citizenship status is taken into account, Asian registration increased to 57% and voting to 50% among eligible adults. There was still a 13-14% participation gap between Asians and whites.

Even in a small area of Asian politics--donating money to political campaigns--where participation may not be lacking, there is a deficit in the return for Asians. Although Asians have been found to contribute money in greater proportion to their share of the population, the reactions to this emerging view of Asians as the new political moneybags of American politics have not been totally positive, particularly when considering the absence

of the types of political benefits and goods--be it greater access or more high-level decision-making appointments--that were sought after or promised in the campaigns (Nakanishi 1991).⁸ Besides, the higher amount of money donated by Asians as a whole does not necessarily indicate that more Asians participated in making political contributions. Comparing the rate of political involvement between Japanese Americans in a California sample and the general population in a national sample, Fugita and O'Brien (1991) found that the rate for Japanese Americans was 26% higher than that for the general public. Yet, Uhlaner and her associates (1989) found that Asian respondents in California did not contribute money at a higher rate than their non-Hispanic white counterparts in the 1984 campaign.⁹

In sum, although progress has been made over the years, observers noted that "Asian American politics has remained to an unusual degree 'politics by other means,' i.e., not direct electoral representation but indirect access through campaign contributions, lobbying, litigation, and protest" (Erie and Brackman 1993, 47). And this "asymmetrical participation" in campaign contribution has not produced very efficacious results in terms of public office holding.

The Puzzle and Some Macro Answers

The preceding review of the current state of Asian Americans presents a two-tiered picture. Although Asian Americans have experienced an explosive increase in

population and have enjoyed the highest levels of education, family income, and naturalization rate among ethnic groups in recent decades, the participation of Asian Americans either in government or in the electoral process has been extremely limited. Despite some evidence of the Asian gain in resources and leverage in recent years, the return in offices held is comparatively low and it remains a puzzle why the political participation of Asian Americans is very low in relation to their socioeconomic achievement and population share.

Numerous explanations, mostly at the aggregate level, have been proposed for the participation deficit. Some noted the history of exclusion and discrimination experienced by Asian immigrants regardless of their national origins and time of arrival (Daniels 1988; Takaki 1989; Chan 1991; Feagin and Feagin 1993; Hing 1993). A few mentioned the general antipathy toward government which often grew out of the unpleasant or fearful experiences dealing with corrupt regimes in home countries (Nakanishi 1991; Skelton 1993) or the continued interference of homeland government and politics in the Asian American community (Kim 1981; Kwong 1987; Chang 1988; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Wang 1991). Some emphasized the cultural impediment factor that the Buddhist-Confusianist values of hierarchy, reverence for authority, resignation, and passivity are antidemocratic civic traditions discouraging the participation of Chinese,

Japanese, and Korean Americans in democratic partisan politics (Sue and Sue 1971; Kitano 1976). Others attributed low participation to the legal restraints in the electoral system via the numerous practices of minority vote dilution. These include the requirements of geographic compactness and bloc voting component in redistricting and in accessing a foreign language ballot (Bai 1991; Kwok and Hui 1993; Ancheta and Imahara 1993). Still others mentioned the labor market segmentation which is responsible for the underemployment, underpayment, and a lack of upward occupational mobility of group members (Suzuki 1977; Kwong 1987; Light and Bonacich 1988). In his account of the Asian American Movement, Wei (1993) offered another set of reasons--the lack of a nationally known leadership, unified ideology, or even a plan of action.

Most basically, the participation potential of Asians may be severely discounted by certain demographic characteristics unique to an emergent multi-ethnic minority group. First, despite the rapid growth of Asian population in recent decades, the total number continues to be small and accounts for only 3% of the entire U.S. population. Second, the presence of a large stock of the foreign-born and the young means that members are likely to have limited proficiency in English and incomplete information about the political system and democratic processes, and would possibly not be eligible for citizenship and/or using the

voting privilege for a long while (Rothenberg 1989). Third, the population is heavily concentrated in the Western region and mostly dispersed in a number of metropolitan areas where the costs of living tends to be higher and foreign-born immigrants and other minority groups also congregate. Fourth, the population is fragmented as well across generations, nationalities, religions, languages, and social classes. In a political system where numbers count, Asians (and their minority neighbors) are disadvantaged by their relative small size, limited experiences, and tremendous internal diversity.

Yet, it is unclear how seriously small population size or low population share impedes Asian participation. For unlike other minority groups, there exists a lack of correspondence between Asian American population size/share and political participation or representation. Asian Americans who have been elected often come from districts with a very small percentage of Asian population. A case in point is the election of Michael Woo to the Los Angeles city council from a district that was only 5% Asian in 1985. Another example is the election of Norman Mineta to the U.S. House of Representatives from a district with 2.5% Asian in 1975. On the other hand, municipalities having high Asian concentration such as Monterey Park and San Francisco do not have a proportion of high officials that comes close to resemble proportional representation. In the same vein,

Erie and Brackman (1993) found that homogeneous precincts with higher percentage of Asians did not have a larger turnout rate among Asians.

Many in the community also contend that the image of socioeconomic success is more myth than reality, that economic deprivation, racism, and nativism persist, and that the gilded image only serves to increase the tension between Asians and other minority groups as well as within the Asian community (e.g., Suzuki 1977; Hurh and Kim 1989; Lee 1989; Takaki 1989; Feagin and Feagin 1993; Ong and Hee 1994). They claim that the use of median family income and the like as indicators of wealth may inflate the value of income and mask the lack of economic participation of the group. A closer look into information presented in Bennett (1992) supports this assertion in several ways: 1) Nineteen percent of Asian families had three or more earners, compared to fourteen percent of white families. 2) Seventy-four percent of Asian families consisted of three or more persons as compared to fifty-seven percent for whites. 3) The high median income may not hold true for some Asian groups such as Samoans, Guamanians, and Vietnamese. As a consequence, the per capita income of Asians in 1990 (\$13,420) was about \$2,000 lower than that for whites and a larger proportion of the Asian population (11%) was below poverty. The higher tendency for Asians to reside in the Western region and metropolitan areas may further discount the value of income

for many Asian families. Moreover, there was continued evidence of under employment and lower educational returns. In 1990, the proportion of Asian males having 4 or more years of college in the executive, administrative, and managerial occupations (23%) was significantly smaller than that for their white counterparts (31%). The median earnings of full-time college-educated Asian workers (\$34,470) was also lower than that for whites (\$36,130). Perhaps because of the economic segmentation, past research has not been able to find a strong relationship between aggregated socioeconomic measures and registration (Nakanishi 1985-1986).

In sum, an overview of the existing literature using macro-level analyses suggests that the participation deficit of the Asians may be attributed more to historical, cultural, homeland political, legal, economical, and group organizational factors, and less so to objective socioeconomic class or demographic indicators. The puzzle lingers on: Are sociodemographic factors not useful to predict Asian participation or are they less valid predictors for Asians than for other groups? Should we revise our understanding of the defining role of sociodemographic characteristics in political participation? What better explains the political participation of Asians?

An Alternative Approach: Studying the Individuals

Whereas each of these macro-level theories offers some insight into the roots of the Asian under-participation, and the conceptualization of the current study certainly benefits from these predecessors, few give any estimate of the magnitude of the deficit as compared to other ethnic group(s). No one has been able to compare in a systematic way the efficacy of one theory to the other(s) nor to explain individual differences in the extent and the likelihood of participation. Without controlling for alternative explanations, causality is often difficult to attribute. And many, by focusing on structural constraints, seem to explain better the lack of rather than the incidence of participation. Although qualitative data gathered by studies using in-depth interviews, participant-observations, community power, and ethnography provide great insight into the dynamics of participation in a designated setting, the narratives are limited to the context under study and cannot be used to make generalizations beyond the subjects chosen. Using the macro-level approach is therefore insufficient to answer the questions proposed above.

An individual-level survey-based approach as adopted by this study, by contrast, is able to answer questions such as: Does being an Asian American matter for participation? and How? What is the role of socioeconomic status and other factors for Asians as compared to other ethnic groups in

assessing the impact of ethnicity on participation? What explains the participation patterns within the pan-Asian as well as the respective nationality group? These are questions raised in political participation research in the United States. Chapter 2 reviews five of the major theories of political participation in the discipline and evaluates the efficacy of each in the studying of Asian participation. Key concepts such as ethnicity and political participation are defined and hypotheses proposed.

One major reason past research has not been focusing on individuals is the lack of data, particularly large-scale comparative survey data. The one exception is the California Ethnicity Survey collected in 1984 by Uhlauer and others (1989) on which this student has conducted extensive research (Lien, 1992, 1993, 1994). In light of this research vacuum, a proposal to launch a large-scale in-language¹⁰ national survey of Asians in America may be highly appealing. However, the costs involved can be very high.¹¹ An alternative approach, secondary analysis of surveys previously collected for other uses, is therefore proposed for this study. An extensive search into major social science data archives and research institutes in the U.S. for opinion surveys with a significant number of Asian American respondents produced four polls collected by the Los Angeles Times in southern California counties between 1989 and 1993. Two of them ("Asians in Southern California,

1993" and "Koreans in Los Angeles, 1992") are used in the analyses.

Chapter 3 describes the data sets used as well as the operational definitions of key concepts. Justifications and limitations of secondary analysis and of survey data are discussed. A methodological review on the studying of Asian American politics is also included.

The results of the Southern California study are reported in Chapter 4. Additional methodological issues and results of the Korean study are the focus of Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 puts the question of participation deficit in perspective by asking whether participation matters for Asians as a group and as compared to other ethnic groups in the political environment. Differences between voters/participants and non-voters/-participants in terms of sociodemographic outlook, minority group experiences, political information, policy preferences, and other political orientations are explored. Comparisons are also made between Asian and non-Asian voters in terms of the distributions and distances of their policy and political attitudes.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by first revisiting the research questions and summarizing major findings. It then ponders on the implications of the "non-significant" findings for models of Asian American political participation. Recognizing the central role of the

mobilization context, the study ends by discussing some of the movers and shakers in the on-going Asian American Movement such as political parties, ethnic community organizations, and the ethnic media.

Notes

1. The census' use of the term "whites" generally includes persons of Hispanic origin. According to a March 1992 Current Population Survey (CPS), about one tenth of whites are of Hispanic origin. Although there is a lot of contention in the Hispanic community about the adequacy and the choice of a panethnic group label, the term "Latinos" is used in this study to refer to this diverse ethnic group.
2. Compared to Anglo whites, the percentage of Asians 25 or older having four or more years of college education (37.2%) also exceeded that of whites (30.5%). However, the median income for Asian families in 1989 (\$39,296) was lower than that for Anglos (\$41,222).
3. The term first appeared in a New York Times' article in 1966 to describe the success of Japanese Americans. An analysis of media portrayals of Asian Americans in recent decades revealed some change of direction. Asian American issues of crime, school dropout, and poverty were gradually incorporated into the popular discourse in the 1980s. However, there was a continued reliance on a culturally-based explanations of success which stressed Asian American educational achievement and supported the 'model minority' thesis (Osajima 1988).
4. The situation in the state of Hawaii is an exception because even since the beginning of statehood in 1959, congressional seats in both the U.S. Senate and House have been dominated by Japanese Americans who were elected by a population with nearly two-thirds originating from Asia or Pacific Islands. But the political power of other Asians is also in the rise. In the mid-term election of 1994, it was a Filipino American, Ben Cayetano, who filled the Governor's seat.
5. Because of the small population size, results on Asians from this government-sponsored survey or from any other public or private survey can only be treated as suggestive. Large-scale government surveys such as those reported by the Current Population Survey (CPS) have a much smaller sampling error than any other surveys.

6. The absence of elected representatives does not necessarily mean that Asians were totally excluded from state politics. The Office of Asian/Pacific Affairs (1987-1991) created by President pro Tem David Roberti in the California Senate served, along with other Asian Pacific legislative aides, many of the same functions performed by black and Latino representatives for their ethnic constituents (Syer and Culver 1992).

7. Another reason for this as well as many other local defeats may be that having more than one Asian candidate running at the same time for the same office can split the community's votes and resources. Espiritu (1992) cited some instances of this in the city council elections in 1991. She perceived this as a potential threat to solidarity of the pan-Asian community.

8. An author commented that this "asymmetrical participation" has started to change in recent years after a group of Chinese Americans formed a bipartisan Interim Coordinating Committee for Chinese Americans (ICCCA) to ask for better value of their money (Wei 1993).

9. The rate for Asians and Whites was 18% and 20%, respectively. However, the rate for Asian citizens was 24%. There was also a large difference in terms of participatory rate among respondents of the five major Asian groups surveyed.

10. Interviews conducted in the preferred languages of the respondents rather than in English only may be very much needed for an internally-diverse ethnic group with a large proportion of non-English speakers.

11. According to an experienced Asian American pollster, the estimated cost for a 30-minute telephone survey of 1,000 respondents nationwide randomly selected from a list of common Asian surnames and interviewed either in English or their home-country language is at least US\$45,000.

CHAPTER 2 THEORIES OF ETHNICITY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Quite a few sets of theories exist in the current literature to explain the political participation of Americans in general. Theories on the participation of ethnic minority groups are few and often target blacks. In this chapter, five models of ethnic group political participation are proposed and their relevance to explaining the political participation of Asian Americans are examined. Special attention will be paid to the concept of ethnicity and the roles of socioeconomic status (SES) and socio-psychological factors in the shaping of a (pan)ethnic group identity in Asian America.

Definitions of Key Concepts

Before the relationship between ethnicity and political participation can be meaningfully discussed and analyzed, it is necessary to define the meanings of ethnicity, Asian American (pan)ethnicity, and political participation as adopted by this study.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity can be defined as a sense of belonging to "an involuntary group of people who share the same culture" or are perceived by others as sharing the same culture (Isajiw 1974, 122). Expressions of ethnicity for minority groups are complex and always occur against a

backdrop of at least two levels of identification--with one's own ethnic group and with the dominant group (Yinger 1985; Hutnik 1986). For groups in change, the double boundary is often maintained from within by the socialization process and from without by the process of intergroup relations (Barth 1969; Isajiw 1974). For groups that have a recent history of international migration and are experiencing rapid changes in their composition and socio-political position, the concept of culture, however, refers much less to an unmediated heritage than to socially constructed boundaries which can be created and re-created to unite group members (Roosens 1989). Immigrant group ethnicity, therefore, is an "emergent phenomenon" rather than a static construct (Yancey, Erickson, and Juliani 1976). Far from being an essence or something fixed, concrete, or objective, ethnic/racial identity is formed through the interaction between subjective identification and objective conditions and can be constantly transformed by political conflicts (Omi and Winant 1986).

However, ethnicity may be derived not from one distinctive, integrated culture but from a multiplicity of cultures coercively lumped together under one supranational group label, such as the inclusion of Mexicans, Cubans, and Columbians under the umbrella term, Latinos. These designations discount class, national, and generational cleavages. The equivalent of the term "ethnicity" as is

used to classify blacks or Jews then may be "panethnicity" or "the generalization of solidarity among ethnic subgroups" (Espiritu 1992, 6). According to Espiritu, previously unrelated and marginalized ethnic groups, thrown together at first by ignorant or insidious panethnic categorization and later by racial violence, confront the meanings of the imposed pan-group identity and the deprived group status, and unite together to protect and promote collective interests. The result of this process--variously called "ethnicization" (Sarna 1978), "racialization" (Omi and Winant 1986), or "ethnic Americanization" (Fuchs 1990)--is the forging of a multi-tiered, situational, and partly ascribed panethnic culture. Although summarily called ethnicity in this study, distinctions between pan-group ethnicity (panethnicity) and sub-group ethnicity (nationality) will be made when necessary.

On the other hand, ethnicization is also a process of building up a sense of national identity with the host country (Garcia 1987; Finifter and Finifter 1989) where the extent of identification as being an American is at least as important as being an ethnic minority. The term "assimilation" or the characterization of immigrants' responses to the host environment, however, is highly inadequate to describe the process of becoming Americans (Feagin and Feagin 1993). Because of differences in experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, unique group

history, and political/economic structure such as the presence of urban machines, many noted that the assimilation experience of European immigrants cannot be transferred to immigrants from other parts of the world (e.g., Pachon 1985; Fuchs 1990; Hero 1992).

Beginning with Gordon's (1964) notion that the adaptation of non-Anglo-Saxon-Protestants may take place in a number of stages, many scholars perceive the Americanization of immigrants as an endless and dialectical process of acculturation (Parenti 1967; Hurh 1980; Keyes 1981; Padilla 1985; Keefe and Padilla 1987; Kitano and Daniels 1988; Waters 1990). In this process, immigrants may have adopted certain cultural patterns in public domain but have maintained a distinct subculture in private domain (Keefe and Padilla 1987; Hutchison 1988). They may also have any one of the four combinations of high/low ethnic identity and high/low acculturation (Hurh 1980; Kitano and Daniels 1988). The persistence of ethnic culture, according to Portes and Rumbaut (1991), "has been the rule among immigrants, old and new, and represents simultaneously a central part of their process of political incorporation" (141). They may also become culturally but not psychologically or structurally adapted to the new identity (Yinger 1985). Instead of predicting assimilation or the eventual adoption of a white American identity and the complete detachment from the ethnic culture over time, this

multi-dimensional concept of ethnicity allows one the freedom to maintain ethnic loyalty at one level and to become acculturated to the new identity at another level.

Asian American (pan)ethnicity. Although immigrants from different Asian nations coming to America at different stages of history have a shared experience of discrimination and have long been received with panethnic terms such as "Asiatic," "Oriental," and "Mongolian," the development of an unified ethnic group identity or panethnicity among Asian Americans has a short history. The term "Asian American" was introduced only in the late 1960s by a group of mainly native-born Chinese and Japanese college students and later by professionals in the community-based human service organizations in a movement aiming to fight for racial equality, social justice, and political empowerment (Wei 1993). It was a product of the convergence of at least three forces: internal demographic changes, the anti-Vietnam War protests as well as the Black Power and other New Left movements, and the emergence of pan-Asian organizations such as Asian American Political Alliance (Espiritu 1992).

Despite the inclusive label, Asians seldom think of themselves as a single people. They often identify themselves as people from a certain Asian country or even a certain district or region within a country. Thus, pan-Asianism has been observed to be primarily the ideology of native-born, American-educated, and middle-class Asians.

Nevertheless, as indicated above, the construction of a culture is often not voluntary and ethnicity is multi-dimensional, contextual, and flexible in nature. Hence, (pan)ethnicity is not able to be fully indexed or explained by a respondent's self-identification with the pan-Asian or a specific Asian ethnic group. Rather, components of ethnicity can be revealed when multiple indicators measuring such dimensions as acculturation, ethnic attachment, and group consciousness are used. More discussion on the layers of ethnicity can be found in the chapter (3) which delineates operational definitions. Suffice it to say that at least when the right context emerges, e.g., the prevalence of racial violence or the urgent need for social service funding or to overcome the arbitrary and inconsistent census classification of persons of Asian origin, pan-Asian group consciousness can be raised and political action mobilized (Espiritu 1992).

Political participation. Scholars disagree on the meaning of "political participation" (Conway 1991b). In the first chapter, political participation was defined to include not only actions by individuals to influence the selection and/or the actions of government officials (Verba and Nie 1972) but also the outcome of this participation in the sharing of governing. The purpose is to give a more inclusive picture about the political status of Asian America--the distance between political actions and the goal

of full empowerment. For the individual-level analysis which is the main thrust of this study, the definition offered by Milbrath and Goel (1977) which covers individual actions and/or attitudes both to influence and to *support* government and politics seems to be more appropriate to describe the participation process for persons with recent immigration background. Examples of participation in the surveys used include citizenship intent and naturalization for the foreign-borns, voter registration and voting for citizens, and, for all members of the society, making campaign contributions, contacting officials, attending political meetings or fund-raisers, and volunteering for a political cause.

Some studies have found political participation to be multidimensional (Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Because of the different degrees of demand on information and motivation for each type of activities, those who vote often do not share the same level of involvement as those who join with a group or organization to solve community problems, or work for political campaigns, or contact elected officials. However, some note that, at least in the past 20 years, participants tended to overlap in activities that required the same kinds of resources but not to the extent of clustering in identifiable "modes" (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). This is supported by a study on Asian and Mexican Americans where

voting and other conventional activities can all be loaded into one factor (Lien 1994). Thus, the dimensionality of participation remains an open question.

Voting is often observed to be a blunt indicator of the overall satisfaction and involvement of the public.

However, it also provides an equality no other types of participation can afford: each citizen gets one and only one vote (Verba et al. 1993a). For the majority of Americans, voting requires few resources (registration and information) and is easily practiced (Teixeira 1992). Yet, for colored minorities, the promise of voting equality did not come close to being carried out until the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and its amendment on non-English ballots in 1975. Before the installment of these legal guarantees, citizens of Asian origin, like citizens of African or Hispanic origins, had to overcome the barriers of English-only elections, literacy tests, racial gerrymandering, and physical intimidation and violence to register to vote (Wei 1993). For individuals with a recent history of immigration, there is an additional "cost" to this most common form of participation--the acquisition of citizenship, which is itself a process most likely influenced by proximity to the mother country, fear of officials from Immigration and Naturalization Service, lack of information and knowledge, difficulty in meeting language and civics requirements, and a general lack of a sense of

political efficacy and trust in political institutions of the mother country where socialization was initiated (Fuchs 1990). Other barriers that increase the costs of participation for recent immigrant groups include the regionally-dispersed and geographically-concentrated distribution of the population, the high proportions of the young and the new, along with the institutionalized practices of minority vote dilution (Pachon 1985). Many of these and other determinants of participation are discussed in the next section.

Models of Ethnic Political Participation

Ethnic Culture Model

To explain the distinctive patterns of political participation of ethnic Americans, a common approach in survey-based research is to attribute the patterns to a composite ethnic culture variable as denoted by one's self-identified or ascribed race, language, religion, or national origin. Assessment of the independent impact of the ethnic factor is then achieved by adding some control over a respondent's socio-political background. Although this approach is useful to capture whatever group-related effect is left unexplained by other quantifiable measures in the equation, this cultural definition of ethnicity has increasingly been criticized in recent years as reductionist and is unable to reflect the evolving or situational nature of ethnicity (Patterson 1975).

Nonetheless, as discussed above, the meaning of culture for any ethnic or panethnic minority group includes more than primordial ties. Particularly for Asian Americans, the supranational group label was not created spontaneously by persons of different Asian nationality origins. Instead, it was the product of the interaction of external and internal forces which help create and re-create the political community. Asian American ethnic culture, in other words, is a panethnic culture. Perhaps because of this unique property of ethnicity, a past attempt by Uhlauer et al. (1989) had very limited success in locating a universal principle that can account for the participation of Asians as well as of blacks, Latinos, and Anglo whites. It is possible that the Asian American culture in and of itself not only may render differently the meanings of the existing measures of participation for Asians than for other groups, but that it may not be fully accounted for by existing measures which often focus on one's current experience in the United States (Lien 1994).

For this study focusing on the political participation of Asians in Southern California, it is hypothesized that the Asian American panethnic culture will again have significant impact on participation. The significance of the participation deficit, however, may be reduced when variables measuring a respondent's sociodemographic background and political attitudes structuring one's

ethnicity are controlled. Within each Asian ethnic/nationality group, the role of ethnic culture associated with each home country to explain participation may be similar to that for the pan-Asian group. However, the meaning of nationality may also draw from a more or less distinct cultural heritage. Therefore, consistent with criticisms of primordialism, the impact of ethnic culture as indicated by one's country of origin may not be a significant predictor of participation when measured along with indicators of current status and attitudes (Lien 1992; 1994).¹

Socioeconomic Model

The defining impact of socioeconomic indicators--especially education--has been well-established in the American political participation literature (e.g., Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Conway 1991a; Leighley and Nagler 1992; Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie 1993b). Generally, evidence supports the idea that citizens of higher social and economic status participate more in electoral politics. This is partly because of the comparative absence of political cleavage along class lines in the U.S. two-party system (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978). This is also because education may impart democratic values and information about government and politics, nurture a sense of competence and efficacy which predisposes an individual to political

involvement, and provide facilitating skills to obtain more information about politics. Income, on the other hand, may enable the disposal and conversion of wealth into other resources or the tradeoff for other opportunities and reduce the costs of participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Education, in addition, can increase one's opportunity to be placed in social networks through employment, organization membership, or volunteer work (Verba et al. 1993b). Given that this conclusion is often derived from observing the white majority, it remains to be seen if it can be applied to different ethnic groups in America.

When socioeconomic factors are added to assess the independent impact of ethnicity, many studies have found that the difference in voting and registration rates between blacks (or Latinos) and whites decreased or disappeared (e.g., Milbrath and Goel 1977; Conway 1991a; Teixeira 1992; Verba et al. 1993b). This indicates that the impact of class may be more important than ethnicity. However, given the empirical relationship between SES and ethnicity, the impact of class may be overemphasized whereas the role of ethnicity is underplayed. Using five ethnic/nationality groups in New York, Nelson (1979) found support for his hypothesis that ethnicity has an independent influence on participation over and above socioeconomic class.

Decomposing persons of Hispanic origin into three nationality groups, Calvo and Rosenstone (1989) showed that

the education-turnout relationship holds for Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, but not for Cubans. Higher educated Cubans did not turnout more than their coethnics who did not finish grammar school. Similarly, studies on Asians using either aggregated or individual approach found a lack of relationship between SES and registration or turnout (Nakanishi 1985-86; Lien 1992). By comparison, Lien (1994) found that Mexican Americans in the same survey displayed a very strong relationship between SES and participation in voting and other types of activities. Because a larger proportion of both Asians and Cubans are of higher SES than are Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, it is possible that the differential in the impact of SES is smaller for higher status groups than for lower status groups.

Yet, it may also be possible that the influence of socioeconomic factors for emergent groups such as Asians and Latinos on participation is weak as compared to the more established groups such as Anglo whites and blacks. In the same study by Calvo and Rosenstone, the impact of education and income was less significant for Hispanics than for non-Hispanics. The reason for this may be that members may find it harder to translate their educational achievement into resources for participation (i.e., information, time, and money) because of either language difficulty for the foreign-borns,² lower returns for educational attainment in income and employment, or that there are many more

compelling demands of time for immigrant group members in their daily struggles to adapt to the adopted land. Second, past socialization either in an undemocratic homeland or in a democracy with blatant legal discrimination against newcomers may impede the development of political efficacy and a sense of civic duty which were found to increase participation. Third, the emergent minority status of the group and the lack of perceived benefits (via representation in government) may negatively affect the participation potential for both the native- and foreign- born members.

Demographic Model

In addition to socioeconomic factors, demographic factors specific to the immigrant population such as nativity, age, length of stay, and gender may have a substantial impact on participation.³ These factors are particularly important for studying the participation of new immigrant groups, for these are the factors that may have direct or indirect bearing on the extent of social learning and integration. As one ages or stays longer in the adopted land, one may acquire language skills, know more about the host community, produce a second or more generation, become eligible for citizenship, and develop political interests in the adopted society because of the many stakes involved.

Sheer time or the passage of years in chronological age, commented Converse (1969), only serves as a proxy on how much exposure an individual has in the political

environment. For foreign-born immigrants, he noted that the length of stay may be a better indicator of exposure to the U.S. politics than age. Lee (1980) observed that being foreign born may imply a lack of experience with the American political system, the preoccupation with economical survival, interference from the home government, an unawareness of the need to assimilate, weak organization membership, cultural ambivalence, and a fear of social rejection by the mainstream. However, when length of stay (or age for the native-born) or percentage of life time spent in the U.S. (length/age) is used along with nativity, past studies have found them to be less useful than age to predict participation (Uhlamer et al. 1989; Uhlamer 1991; Lien 1994). Gitelman's (1982) study on the resocialization of Russian immigrants in Israel also noted a lack of linear relationship between length of stay and political adaptation except in the early years of arrival.

Part of the reason for the counterintuitive findings may be that, like the political learning of young adults (Jennings 1989), there is a certain formative period in the immigrant's life history when loyalty to a new political system can be imprinted. This threshold effect appears to be at work in Black, Neimi, and Powell's (1987) finding of a positive relationship between age and the acquisition of partisanship and other indicators of political involvement among new immigrants to Canada.⁴ More basically, much of

the relationship between time and participation is made under the assumption that there is an upward social mobility over time. Although Dahl's (1961) assimilation theory that the importance of ethnicity will succumb to class concerns has been seriously attacked for its lack of validity, his assertion of a positive association between social mobility and time in the host nation--particularly over immigration generations--has not been seriously challenged. As a matter of fact, demographic factors, like the socioeconomic factors, have received substantial support from studying Latinos because of the relatively larger presence of the young, the new, and the poor among the present generation (e.g., de la Garza 1987; Calvo and Rosenstone 1989; Fuchs 1990; Hero 1992; Garcia, Garcia, de la Garza, and Falcon 1992).⁵ Many Asians are similarly young and new but not necessarily poor or under-educated. It is therefore hypothesized that demographic variables will have less impact on the participation of Asians than for other groups. Further, among the demographic variables for Asians, age may be more useful than other indicators of time to predict participation. Yet, among the foreign-born generation, length of stay may be an even more important determinant of participation.

Gender. The role of gender in ethnic group political participation has been controversial because of the implied conflicts between feminism and cultural nationalism.

Critics in both the Chicano and Asian American Movements have worried that the emphasis on women's identity and rights would divide the ethnic community in its struggle against racism (Chow 1987; Garcia 1989). Yet, research using either an individual or a community approach has not provided much support for the hypothesis that feminism hurts ethnic minority group empowerment. Being minority and female is often not a liability in political participation. Instead, particularly for African American women, it may help to motivate participation in politics.

Perhaps boosted by being conscious of the "dual oppression" of both sexism and racism, black women typically participate at higher levels than their male counterparts (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981; Baxter and Lansing 1983; Jennings 1993). Although the gender advantage of Black female participants disappeared in the turnout of 1984 when factors such as income, home ownership, and political interest were controlled, Tate (1993) reported that black women were more likely to be partisan, interested in political campaigns, and registered to vote than black men. The observation on Latina women is more complex. In the first national survey of Latinos, being a woman of Mexican or Cuban origin was insignificant to predict turnout but being a woman of Puerto Rican origin depressed the turnout in 1988 (Garcia et al. 1992). For Californian Asians in the election of 1984, gender was insignificant to predict voting

or other types of electoral participation when sociodemographic and attitudinal factors are controlled (Lien 1994).

Support for the role of gender in motivating ethnic political participation is more evident from recent community studies. In a study of the Latino community in Boston where Puerto Ricans constitute a substantial portion of the population, Latina women are found to make up the majority of the participants and activists at all types of political events (Hardy-Fanta 1993). Similarly, Saito (1992) observed that Asian women are involved in politics at all levels and their success as candidates and community activists have been crucial to constructing the Asian political base in Monterey Park, CA. This is so despite the consistent findings from census studies that more Asian American women are compelled to involve themselves full-time in the labor force and receive lower returns to their education than do white women (Matthaei and Amott 1990; Chan, 1991; Bennett 1992; Kim and Lewis 1994). A rationale behind the phenomenon is that, like the Latinas in Pardo's (1990) study, the dual obligation for the family and work place may facilitate the developing of social networks and transform the concern over education and other family issues to more involvement with community issues and political action. This, in turn, may compensate for the socialization bias that encourages submission and passivity. The net

effect in terms of mass politics may be the insignificance of gender in participation.⁶

The role of gender in mobilizing Asian participation can take a downward turn when it intersects with nativity. For many--especially non-English speaking--foreign-born Asian women, their potential for political participation can at least be triply depressed by their prior socialization which does not treat women as equal partners, by their new obligation to join the immigrant labor market to meet the needs for survival, and by their necessity to adjust to being members of an American ethnic minority. It is therefore hypothesized that, though gender may not be significant in and by itself, being a foreign-born Asian woman may depress the likelihood to participate in the U.S. political system.

Socio-Psychological Model

The role of socio-psychological factors such as partisan attachment, sense of civic duty, political efficacy, interest in politics, trust in government, and concern over election outcome has asserted its importance on participation ever since the seminal study by Campbell and his associates (1960). In terms of comparing participation across ethnic groups, Verba and Nie (1972) introduced the concept of group consciousness which was found to compensate for the disadvantaged SES of blacks in the late 1960s. Later scholars found that black group consciousness matters

because of its linkage to political efficacy and trust (Shingles 1981). Extending the examination to cover members of both subordinate and dominant groups, Miller and his associates (1981) emphasized that it was the interaction of both group identification and politicized consciousness which mobilized participation. Adopting the concept of Miller et al., Uhlener and her associates (1989) found that group consciousness can help explain away the participation disparity between Anglo whites and Latinos but not between Anglos and Asians. Lien's follow-up study (1994) found that for both Asian and Mexican Americans in California, the concept of group consciousness is multidimensional, with each dimension having different ramifications for voting and other types of participation for each of the two immigrant group. She found that the addition of racial alienation and deprivation indicators, along with other indicators of the ethnicization process such as acculturation and ethnic ties, improved our understanding of participation for both ethnic groups.

In light of the strong empirical support for socio-psychological factors, it is likely that a similar multi-faceted nature of ethnicity can be found in this study and that measures associated with the shaping of ethnic group consciousness and identity in America such as personal experiences of discrimination, concern over group status and interests, and attitudes or efforts supporting

integration/acculturation may have a positive impact on participation, whereas indicators of ethnic resilience will not have a negative impact.

Legal Constraints Model

Unlike conventional legal models that deal with the differences in registration requirements across states (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Caldeira, Patterson, and Markko 1985; Calvert and Gilchrist 1993; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), this discussion of immigrant group participation examines the effect of two legal prerequisites for enfranchisement, citizenship status and voter registration.⁷ In the past, at least before the 1950s, the lack of political participation of Asians can mostly be attributed to the discriminatory immigration and naturalization laws and other legal restraints at federal, state, and local levels. Among the more infamous were the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Alien Land Law of 1913, and the internment of Japanese Americans in WWII. Between 1879 and 1952, the California constitution prohibited employment of Chinese by any government entity or corporation in the state. Until 1943, Chinese were prohibited from immigration to the U.S. and citizenship was denied to those already in the country. Naturalization for immigrants from all countries in Asia was possible only after the passing of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. But the number eligible for this process was not significant

until after the implementation of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act when U.S. finally opened its arms to embrace immigrants from the "Third World".

Today, citizenship status is granted automatically to all those who were born in this country and it is one of the prerequisites for voting. For those who were born outside of the country but want to be politically empowered by being able to vote, they need to go through first a lengthy and complicated (and often costly) process of naturalization that requires legal residence of 5 or more years with at least 30 months of continuous stay during this period, a record of good moral character, and successful completion of exams on the English language and U.S. history and government.

If speedy naturalization is an indicator of one's desire to become integrated, Asians at the aggregate have the strongest commitment to stay and be incorporated into the American society. Barkan (1983) found that between 1958 and 1978, despite great variations among nationality groups, eight out ten foreign-born Asians were naturalized by the 8th year of residence; comparatively, the ratio for non-Asians was five and a half out of ten. From 1976 to 1986, Portes and Rambaut (1990) reported that the naturalization rate of Asians was six times that of Mexicans. But they also noted great variations among the Asian nationality

groups, particularly that between Vietnamese and Japanese immigrants.

Studying the pattern of naturalization for 23 countries in the 1970s, Portes and Mozo (1985) made a similar observation and they explained that the high rate of Asian naturalization may be related to the lack of geographic proximity to the homeland, the more political than economical motive of emigration, and the higher educational or occupational background. In contrast, Pachon (1991) noted that Latino immigrants had the highest incidence of noncitizenship because of a general confusion over the real benefits of citizenship and the process to attain it. Although political participation other than voting does not require citizenship status, it is likely that those who either took pains to become eligible to vote or were born eligible to participate in basic politics will also be more attuned to participate in politics other than voting. Yet, judging from the non-political motivation of recent non-refugee immigrants from Asia, a more likely scenario is that citizenship status will not have much impact on participation (Erie and Brackman 1993).

A second (or, for almost all of the U.S. born adults, the only) prerequisite for participation in voting is voter registration. For most citizens, registration can be discouraged by the residency requirement, the need to re-register after moving to a different jurisdiction, or to

file for a change of address if moving within same city/county. Colored citizens (residing especially in the South) before 1965 could be prevented from registering because of discriminatory attitudes and procedures such as literacy test, all-white primary, poll tax, harassment, and violence (Conway 1991a). For citizens with a non-English background, their likelihood of registering can be further hindered by cultural passivity,⁸ ignorance about the proper procedures, the lack of foreign-language forms and other election materials,⁹ and the lack of perceived benefits. The registration requirement, therefore, can be a major barrier to voting for immigrant groups. However, past studies have shown that, like voting, registration has a class bias--for instance, among those who moved, registration is less likely for those who have lower levels of education or political interests (Squire, Wolfinger, and Glass 1987). Because registration costs are part of the costs for voting, it is hypothesized that registration will be determined by similar factors that predict voting. Moreover, because registration signifies more than a basic interest in politics, being registered to vote may have a spill-over impact on the probability and extent of participation in other kinds of election-related activities.

Summary

In this chapter, two key concepts of the study--ethnicity and political participation--are conceptually

defined. The five sets of factors previously found to be important to influence ethnic political participation: ethnic culture, socioeconomic status, demographic background, socio-psychological attitudes, and legal constraints are discussed. These five models by no means exhaust the possible explanation of political participation. Some studies, for instance, emphasize the importance of strategic mobilization by political elites (Patterson and Caldeira 1983; Cox and Munger 1989; Uhlaner 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Some found prior socialization or behavior to be crucial (Marquette, Green, and Wattier 1991). Only these five sets of theories are proposed because they are theoretically important and available for empirical tests in the datasets used--which are to be discussed in the next chapter. Also, because each model of participation can only be thought of as being one small chip in a gigantic machine, the efficacy of each may be best tested when others are controlled. Multiple regression analysis, a statistical method designed for such a purpose, as well as other methodological issues will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Notes

1. A potential problem with the author's past (and the current) investigation on the inter-diversity within Asians in America is that the sample size for each nationality group is relatively small--ranging from n=50 for Filipinos to n=89 for Koreans in the 1984 survey and n=23 for Koreans to n=57 for Japanese in the 1993 survey. The number of survey questions suitable to study the issue is also wanting. Results on the impact of different Asian

nationality are therefore only indicative. However, our understanding of the impact of one specific Asian ethnicity (the Korean) may be greatly enhanced by results from a relatively large survey on Koreans in Los Angeles (n=750) which are reported in chapter 5.

2. In the census publication on foreign-born population in 1990 (1993), about half of the Asian immigrants reported that they could not speak English well (49.9%) and about 1/3 reported living in a linguistically isolated household (30.3%).

3. Citizenship status is also a very important factor. However, for the purpose of analysis, we delay the discussion until in the legal model.

4. Alternatively, threshold effect or period effect may be involved. The effect of time may also be curvilinear, but we do not have a longitudinal data set to test these hypotheses.

5. Support for the influence of demographic variables was in fact mixed in the Latino National Political Survey (Garcia et al. 1992). Whereas immigration generation had positive effect on the Mexican and Puerto Rican American turnout in 1988, the impact of age was insignificant when other factors were held constant. And neither immigration nor age could predict turnout for the Cuban Americans.

6. Part of the reason for the lack of effect may be that many individual level studies did not control for working women outside the home, who may be more likely to participate than those who work at home.

7. This legal model is excluded in the analyses using the survey on Koreans because citizenship status and registration are the dependent variables.

8. The primacy of the cultural factor has been seriously challenged by some recent scholars of Asian American and Latino politics.

9. Although Asians are a designated minority that is protected by the foreign-language provision of the 1975 Voting Rights amendment which requires the printing of foreign language ballots and related materials if 5% of the population uses the language, the law is more discriminatory to Asians because of the multi-lingual and residentially-dispersed characteristics of the population. A recent change of criterion to 10,000 people in a jurisdiction is expected to alleviate some of the problem.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Studying Asian American Politics

As indicated in the first chapter, the majority of studies on Asian Americans are at the aggregate level and provide little quantitative data. In reviewing research dealing with Asian American politics, Nakanishi (1985-1986, 2) lamented that "there is an extreme paucity of analysis" and that "[w]hat exists is largely confined to descriptive and historical inquiries" which can be broken down into four areas: 1) discriminatory political actors and policies in the American society; 2) responses by Asian immigrants to both discrimination in the U.S. and events in their homelands; 3) case studies of the actions of Asian Americans; and 4) community and organizational studies exploring the internal dynamics among competing groups. An important reason for this may be that the history of Asian participation in electoral politics that emphasizes numbers is very short. Although Asians in America have a long, though mostly subdued and unrecognized, tradition of engaging in political action, Chan (1991) noted that they never did so on a publicly visible scale until the 1960s.

With a rapidly growing population and an increase in visibility and influence in American politics, a constant

flow of journalistic articles on Asian American political participation started to appear in a certain ethnic media (e.g., *Asian Week*, *KoreAm Journal*, and many English or vernacular language newspapers) and, to a lesser extent, mainstream media (e.g., *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times*). Academic works on Asians in U.S. electoral politics also started to accumulate, especially in the last few years. Beginning with the publication of an anthology based mainly on papers delivered in three conventions in 1978 (Jo 1980), there have been at least two dissertations (Din 1984; Saito 1992), a few specially-commissioned reports (Cain and Kiewiet 1986; Nakanishi 1986; Eckrich, Lew, and Treisman 1987; Muratsuchi 1991; Erie and Brackman 1993), a number of single-authored or edited book chapters (e.g., chapter 9 of Chan 1991; chapter 2 of Jackson and Preston 1991; chapter 3 of Espiritu 1992; chapter 5 of Hing 1993; chapter 8 of Wei 1993; chapter 7 of Fong 1994; chapter 8 of Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994), and finally, a journal *Asian American Public Policy Review* (1990-) to complement the lone and interdisciplinary *Amerasia Journal* (1971-).

The Need for Survey Data

However, studies adopting the micro approach to Asian participation are rare and have generally been conducted at the local or state level in California. The main obstacle is the lack of data. To this student's knowledge, during the entire decade of the 1980s, only one set of survey data

(Uhlauer et al. 1989) was available for systematic examination of differences in various aspects of participation across Asian and other ethnic/minority groups. But perhaps because of the emphasis on the comparative perspective on political participation, the highly valuable data set omitted many factors specific to the immigrant group community that might influence participation (Lien 1992; 1994). The reliance on the regional telephone directory of one nationality group (*1984 Korean Telephone Directory of Southern California*) to yield more than one-fourth of the state's Asian sample was a source of potential bias. The information revealed through the survey may also be dated because it was collected about a decade ago.

The problem with the lack of data, though acute, is probably understandable, given the pan-ethnic group's comparatively small size, racial\lingual diversity, the extremely dispersed residential pattern, and the many constraints to design a cost-efficient and representative survey even within a small geographic region. By this, it also means that Asian respondents, in a few occasions where their ethnicity could be determined by their self-identification as belonging to the Asian race, were often systematically underrepresented in multi-group surveys. One example of this was in the California statewide exit polls conducted by the Field Institute in 1992--of the 8,170 questioned, less than 300 were Asians. Even in a huge

national level survey such as the ABC/CNN exit polls of the 1992 general election (N=15,490), only 156 Asians were counted.¹

In designing a survey that focuses on Asian Americans, scholars will need to make tough choices to balance the demands for efficiency and coverage; and either can be very costly, if the size of the sample is also a concern. Yet, the cost of not having more individual level data on political participation may be even higher. We will not be able to know, for instance:

What is the likelihood that an Asian American will register and actually vote in elections? What factors--be they social class, level of educational attainment, ethnicity, generation, sex, occupation, or religion--have the greatest influence on an individual's likelihood to register, affiliate with a specific party, or become involved in other activities, such as contributing campaign funds, or seeking public office? Which issues are most likely to gain Asian American voters? (Nakanishi 1985-1986, 6)

These are explanatory questions about electoral reality to which "[s]urveys, with all of their limitations, constitute the most direct, and thus most valid, way of finding answers" (Dennis 1991, 52).

Limitations of Secondary Survey Analysis

A compromise between the need for collecting survey data and the lofty costs involved is secondary analysis. Although the research method is increasingly popular, particularly in times of economic fluctuations, secondary survey analysis sometimes is impossible because of the unavailability of data, the mismatch between primary and

secondary objectives, the unduly long delivery time, poor data quality, errors made in the original survey, and--as illustrated above--the number of cases in a specific subpopulation is too small to conduct the desired statistical analysis (Kiecolt and Nathan 1985). In addition, whatever problems intrinsic to the survey method are applicable to secondary analysis, too. According to Babbie (1989), one of the complaints of the survey approach is that it can fragment the complexities of life into discrete, clean-cut, and unitary variables. The other is that it is superficial and can seldom deal with the context of social life. Neither can surveys measure social action--only self-reports of recalled, hypothetical, or prospective action. Surveys may also suffer from the lack of validity because of the need for standardization. Fortunately, some of the problems with surveys can be partly offset through sophisticated analyses, while most of the problems dealing with secondary analysis were overcome because of locating two Southern California surveys conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* Poll in 1992 and 1993.

Data

One of the data sets on which this study is based was drawn from an August 1993 *Los Angeles Times* (LAT) survey of adults residing in one of the following six counties in southern California: Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernadino, Riverside, and Ventura. Random-digit dialing

techniques were used to produce the base sample. Asians and African Americans were selected by oversampling telephone numbers of persons identified as Asians or blacks in LAT polls conducted within the previous two years. The margin of sampling error for the total sample is plus or minus 3%. The margin of error for Asians is plus or minus 8%. Telephone interviews using English or Spanish language were completed with 221 Asians, 199 Latinos, 144 blacks, and 646 (Anglo) whites.² About half (55%) of the entire sample and three-fourths (72%) of the Asian sample were from the Los Angeles city and county area.

Compared to the 1990 Census, the proportion of Los Angeles County residents in the 6-county area was about the same as in the sample (52%), but the proportion of Asians in the sample was 10% higher than that in the census (62%). As is expected with any survey data, respondents' levels of education, income, and the extent of political participation (citizenship, registration, and voting) were higher and the share of foreign-borns was lower than in the census (Appendix B). However, the share of high family income in the Southern California sample was about the same as in the census of Los Angeles County; and the rate of voting among citizens was only slightly higher in the Southern California sample than that in the national sample reported by census.

A second data set used by the study was drawn from a *Los Angeles Times* survey of adult Korean residents of Los

Angeles County between February 26 and March 27 of 1992.

Random-digit dialing techniques were used to produce about one-third of the sample, the rest were drawn from lists of Korean-surnamed households countywide. Telephone interviews using Korean (93%) and English were completed with 750 Koreans. Translation and interviewing were conducted by Interviewing Services of America. The margin of error for the sample is plus or minus 5%.

Compared to the 1990 census, the percentage of foreign-borns (99%) was overrepresented by 17% whereas the percentage of citizens (36%) was underrepresented by 9% in the Los Angeles County (Appendix C). The percentage of Koreans with a bachelor's degree or higher (49%) was much higher than what was reported (34%) for the census; but it was comparable to the figure reported for the sample of Asians in Southern California. Moreover, in a pattern consistent with the Asian data mentioned above, the share of high income families in the Korean sample was about the same as in the census. Yet, the percentage of Koreans registered either among all members or among citizens was much lower in this sample than in the samples for Asians shown in Appendix B.

Although the two *Los Angeles Times* polls are area surveys, they are preferable to previously collected data of a similar nature in that a popular variant of probability sampling technique--random-digit dialing--was incorporated,

enabling the presentation of more representative results and the calculation of sampling errors for this extremely under-researched group.³ Another advantage of the polls is that they contain a fairly large amount of information on race/ethnic relations and other political attitudes. The major drawback of using the two polls, as is true with any secondary analysis, is the lack of a perfect match between proposed research topics and surveyed items. For example, omitted in the polls are a direct measure of panethnicity as well as indicators of the extent of political party affiliation and pre-immigration political socialization. The limit to examining only the California communities also impairs the generalizability of the study to other parts of the nation. The extent of bias for Asians resulting from using these two sets of data has been discussed earlier.

Method

The major purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between political participation and various socio-political factors of Asians as compared to other ethnic groups as well as within the pan-ethnic group. The goal is to test hypotheses derived from the five alternative models discussed in Chapter (2) and find out whether Asian ethnicity matters, how it matters, and what accounts for the political participation of the immigrant group. In the process, three levels of analysis will be involved. At the univariate level, the operational definitions of dependent

variables and independent variables will be introduced, followed by a discussion of their frequency distributions. At the bi-variate level, the relationships of participation with basic sociodemographic and socio-psychological factors will be discussed. At the multi-variate level, a number of explanations for ethnic political participation will compete with each other among respondents of all groups and of the Asian group alone. For the Southern California data, logistic regression, a statistical method for handling dichotomous dependent variables, is used to analyze the likelihood of citizenship/naturalization, registration, voting, and whether one participated in any one of the other political activities. Multiple regression is used to analyze the extent of participation in activities other than voting. For the Korean data, because of the absence of voting and other participation indicators and the presence of a fuller range of ethnicity indicators, attention will be paid to the development of ethnicity and its causal influence on citizenship, citizenship intent, and voter registration. Possibilities of using structural equation models that describe causal relations among latent variables and include coefficients for endogenous variables will be discussed.

Operational Definitions

Political participation. As indicated in Chapter 2, the definition of political participation in this study

refers to the conventional, election-related activities that private persons use to show their allegiance to the political system. Examples of such activities in both data sets include naturalization for the foreign-borns and voter registration for citizens. For the Southern California sample, participation activities also include citizen voting, and, for all members of the society, making campaign contributions, contacting officials, attending political meetings or fund-raisers, and volunteering for a political cause. For the Korean sample, the intent to become naturalized is conceived to be another indicator of participation. Question wording for political participation and other variables is reported in Appendix D.

Because the Southern California data include an extensive list of participation items used by previous scholars to simulate the structure of participation (e.g., Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Bobo and Gilliam 1990), several principal component analyses using varimax rotation were conducted to determine the dimensionality of participation for this sample. The results for all the four groups of respondents and the Asian respondents indicated that those who registered and voted were not necessarily more likely to participate in other types of activities. On the other hand, those who contacted officials were also more likely to contribute money, attend political functions, or volunteer for a political cause.⁴ A summed index of

participation other than voting was created by taking the summed score of the four items of participation mentioned above. In addition, a dummy indicator of participation was also calculated by assigning a value of 1 to those who indicated their participation in any of the four activities.

For the Korean immigrants in Los Angeles, their level of participation into the American political system may be conceived as comprised in an ascending order of citizenship intent, citizenship, and voter registration, with each succeeding act demanding more of the newcomers than the previous one. Because of the non-conflictive nature of these participation items, the term "political integration" is sometimes used to refer to the participation of Koreans in later chapters. Principal component results using varimax rotation indicated that the three acts could all be loaded into one dimension.⁵ A four-point scale of participation was created by assigning a value of 3 to those who registered to vote, a value of 2 to those who were naturalized but not registered, a value of 1 to those who were not naturalized but expected to become one in the next few years, and a value of 0 to those who had done nothing.

(Pan) ethnicity--Function of Objective background. For the Southern California data, a respondent's ethnic background is measured by his/her answer to the question about racial origin. Dummy variables for black, Latino, and Asian ethnicity are created to allow comparisons with the

impact of being white. For the Asians, a respondent's nationality background is determined by his/her response to the question about Asian country of origin. Examination of the effect of nationality within Asians is conducted by first limiting the respondents to those belonging to the five major nationality group in the sample and then creating dummy variables for each of five groups except Chinese.

(Pan)ethnicity--Function of Subjective factors. In concluding her widely-acclaimed book on the institutional aspect of Asian American panethnicity, Espiritu (1992, 168) remarked that "[a]n important next step would be to quantify this consciousness by studying interpersonal pan-Asian ethnicity--most important, its marriage patterns." Although intermarriage is the most studied form of assimilation/adaptation, Williams and Ortega (1990) summarized six other types of indicators basing on Gordon's theory (1964; 1978): culture (language, cultural practices), primary-group structure (neighborhood, friendship, organization membership), ethnic group identification (importance of ethnic background), attitude reception (perceived prejudice), behavior reception (experience of discrimination), and issue opinion (conformity to the majority opinion). For studying Asian participation, it seems that what of urgent need then is not only a formal measure on the state of (pan)ethnic group consciousness, but the possible sources of fusion (English proficiency, common

experiences of prejudice and discrimination, organizational influence--exposure to ethnic/nonethnic media, affiliation with political parties and other social organizations) and fission (attachment to ethnic group culture, concern for homeland politics, etc.).

The two data sets do not contain a direct measure of (pan)ethnicity, but they do hold quite a number of socio-psychological factors relating to the construction of (pan)ethnicity. For the Southern California sample, possible indicators of ethnicization include those approximate the extent of group consciousness such as in domains of attitudinal reception (i.e., the perceptions of own pan-ethnic group being the most deprived, of own pan-ethnic group as having fewer opportunities to get adequate housing, education, or jobs, and of racial discrimination as an important problem in the community) and behavior reception (i.e., the personal experiences of being discriminated against and of being verbally or physically abused because of one's panethnic background). Ethnicization can also be measured by indicators of structural (i.e., having cross-racial friendship) and marital integration (i.e., not opposing to inter-racial/ethnic marriage).

For Asians in Southern California, there are a few more possible indicators of ethnicity formation: 1) the frequency of hearing racial slurs about the pan-ethnic group, 2)

naming of at least one of the following--i.e., Michael Woo, March Fong Eu, Jay Kim, and Daniel Inouye--as a prominent group political leader, 3) knowing the length of pan-group immigration history, 4) knowing the unfair deprivation of one sub-ethnic group in the past (internment of the Japanese in World War II) and support for remedial actions (awarding reparation). Dummy variables were created for these eleven indicators except those measuring the degrees of concern with racial discrimination in community, personal experience of discrimination, and hearing of racial slurs against Asians. These ordinal measures are scored from 1 to 4 with the highest score assigned to the strongest degree of concern or the most frequent experiences of discrimination.

Similarly, the formation of ethnicity for Koreans in Los Angeles is conceived to consist of a number of adaptation stages, which do not necessarily occur in any chronological order. Group consciousness attributable to behavior reception is measured by one's personal experiences of discrimination and hate crimes; that associated with attitudinal reception is indicated by the perceptions of own group condition being worse off than other minorities and of racism being the primary barrier holding Koreans back. Marital integration for Koreans is assessed by one's degree of approving inter-ethnic/-racial marriage⁶ and structural integration by the incidence of having non-Korean friends.

However, a number of items exist exclusively in the 1992 survey of Koreans that can serve as additional indicators of the complex process of immigrant ethnicization. Besides cross-ethnic friendship, possible measures of structural integration include a dummy variable indicating one's membership in a church organization as well as two ordinal measures--the conducting of business with Koreans and/or non-Koreans and the frequency of speaking with white persons in a week. Korean American acculturation can be estimated by the extent of using English and/or Korean language(s) and media in everyday life and the level of proficiency in English. The strength of identifying with one's ethnic background can be gauged by the perceived importance of Koreatown and the preservation of Korean culture for future generations in Los Angeles as well as by one's residing in Korean neighborhood and the expectation to return to Korea sometime in the future. In a range of scores (i.e., 1 to 4 or 1 to 5), higher scores are assigned to those responses indicating greater support of intermarriage and greater ability and likelihood to use English, to speak with white persons, to do business with non-Koreans, and to value Korean culture and Koreatown.

The Structures of Panethnicity

Previous studies have found that the concept of (pan)ethnicity or (pan)ethnic identity is far from monolithic. Although the precise configuration of the

process is still under dispute, the few recent studies that empirically examine the concept tend to differentiate among acculturation, ethnic attachment, and group consciousness or the levels of perceived prejudice and discrimination (Keefe and Padilla 1987; Williams and Ortega 1990; Lien 1994). To find out if a multidimensional structure of panethnicity exists in the two data sets, several principal component factor analyses were run using an oblique rotation.⁷

Results for the Southern California sample are reported in Tables 3-1 to 3-3. To avoid confusion with the somewhat different composition of ethnicity for a specific subgroup, results for the Korean sample are reported in chapter 5.

For both citizens and all respondents in the Southern California sample, the concept of panethnicity has three dimensions: personal experience of racial discrimination, concern over a troubled group status, and acculturation through interracial friendship or marriage. For the Asian subsample, four items specific to the group are added to the analysis--know group history, know group leaders, secure group interest, and hear racial slurs against Asians. The concept of Asian American panethnicity is found to consist of one additional dimension: group deprivation, which is part of the group concern factor for the four panethnic groups and it is negatively related to other dimensions for Asians. Another part of the group concern factor in the entire sample, racial problem, is now closely related to the

Table 3-1
 Principal Component Analysis of Ethnicity Among Citizens
 and All Respondents in the Southern California Survey

(A) Among Citizens

Variable	Oblique Rotated Components ^a (N=970)			Communality ^b
	I	II	III	
<i>Personal Discrimination</i>				
Victim of Hate Crime	.772			.637
Being Discriminated	.751	.317		.600
<i>Concern over Group Status</i>				
Perceive Group Condition Bad		.710		.574
Racial Discrim. a Problem	.376	.621		.462
Own Group Most Deprived	.385	.518	-.363	.505
<i>Acculturation/Racial Integration</i>				
Cross-racial Friendship			.775	.642
Interracial Marriage			.607	.440
Eigenvalue	1.74	1.00	1.12	
Variance (%)	24.9	14.3	16.0	

(B) Among All Respondents

Variable	Oblique Rotated Components ^a (N=1103)			Communality ^b
	I	II	III	
<i>Personal Discrimination</i>				
Victim of Hate Crime	-.821			.683
Being Discriminated	-.700	.387		.586
<i>Concern over Group Status</i>				
Own Group Most Deprived		.657		.525
Racial Discrim. a Problem		.640		.475
Group Condition Bad	-.322	.580		.415
<i>Acculturation</i>				
Cross-racial Friendship			.740	.644
Interracial Marriage			.688	.540
Eigenvalue	1.01	1.70	1.16	
Variance (%)	14.5	24.2	16.6	

Note: ^a Only loading scores greater than .30 or smaller than -.30 are reported. ^b A communality in factor analysis shows how much variance of an observed variable is accounted for by the common factor. It is calculated by summing the squared factor loadings of a variable.

Table 3-2
 Principal Component Analysis of Ethnicity Among Asian
 American Citizens in the Southern California Survey

Variable	Oblique Rotated Components ^a (N=131)				
	I	II	III	IV	Communality ^b
<i>Personal Discrimination</i>					
Victim of Hate Crime	.651				.445
Being Discriminated	.618			-.354	.482
Hear Racial Slurs	.607				.503
Racial Discrim a Prob.	.599	.448			.550
<i>Concern over Group Status</i>					
Know Group Leaders		.643			.501
Perceive Group Condition Bad		.617			.541
Secure Group Interest		.612			.397
<i>Group Deprivation</i>					
Perceive Own Group Most Deprived			-.782		.645
Know Group History			-.691		.577
<i>Acculturation</i>					
Interracial Marriage				.768	.623
Cross-racial Friendship		.333		.742	.647
Eigenvalue	2.06	1.47	1.26	1.11	
Variance (%)	18.8	13.3	11.5	10.1	

Note: (see Table 3-1)

Table 3-3
 Principal Component Analysis of Ethnicity Among All
 Asian Respondents in the Southern California Survey

Variable	Oblique Rotated Components ^a (N=180)				Communality ^b
	I	II	III	IV	
<i>Personal Discrimination</i>					
Victim of Hate Crime	.721				.525
Hear Racial Slurs	.707				.614
Racial Discrim a Prob.	.576			-.427	.544
<i>Concern over Group Status</i>					
Know Group Leaders		.666			.462
Cross-racial Friendship		.632			.518
Secure Group Interest		.595	-.357		.470
Perceive Group Condition Bad		.518		-.388	.434
<i>Group Deprivation</i>					
Know Group History			-.721		.581
Perceive Own Group Most Deprived			-.681		.574
Being Discriminated	.478		-.482		.460
<i>Acculturation</i>					
Interracial Marriage				.824	.710
Eigenvalue	2.05	1.58	1.16	1.09	
Variance (%)	18.6	14.4	10.6	9.9	

Note : (see Table 3-1)

personal experiences of discrimination for Asians. There are also some differences between the results excluding and including noncitizens in terms of the order or the composition of items in a certain factors. Between Table 3-2 and Table 3-3, for instance, while the experience of discrimination loads with the personal factor for Asian citizens, it has a closer relationship to the group deprivation factor for all Asian respondents. Similarly, Asian citizens' having close friends of other races is an indicator of acculturation, but it loads with the concern over group status when noncitizens are included. Between parts A and B of Table 3-1, the sign of the personal discrimination factor is reversed--indicating that, different from the case with citizens, what accounts for the experience of discrimination for all respondents is opposite to the underlying reasons shaping acculturation and group concern. Because the reliability coefficient testing additivity of items in each dimension of panethnicity is no higher than .55, only those variables that have the highest factor score on each dimension were entered in the regression analyses for the Southern California sample.⁸

Summary

This chapter opens with a brief review on the general approaches to the studying of Asian American politics which often fall into the descriptive or historical category, followed by the justifications for the need for a survey

approach. The two datasets used in this micro-level study are introduced, along with the operational definitions of key concepts. The structure of political participation and ethnicity for respondents in the Southern California sample is examined through several principal component analyses. In the following chapter, indicators of primordial and constructed panethnicity joins socioeconomic, demographic, and legal factors to explain the extent and incidence of Asian American political participation within the pan-ethnic group and as compared to other groups in this microcosm of Southern California.

Notes

1. The problem of the small sample size in surveys is not limited to the Asians. In the same exit poll, the percentage of Latino respondents is 2.3%--a percentage much lower than their 9.5% share of the nation's population.
2. The use of "white" in the sample is short for "non-Hispanic white", which is used interchangeably with "Anglo" in this study. This differs from census reports where, unless otherwise specified, "white" includes those with a Hispanic origin.
3. Because the use of weights will significantly reduce the size of the Asian subsample in one survey, weighted results will only be reported for the survey on Koreans.
4. The respective factor score for each activity in the Southern California sample is as follows: Among all respondents, contact officials = .649, attend functions = .641, donate money = .638, political volunteer = .598, register = .725, and vote = .631. The Eigenvalue for participation other than voting is 2.37 with 39.5% of the variance explained and a standardized 4-item alpha of .70. Among Asians, contact officials = .767, attend functions = .727, donate money = .706, political volunteer = .631, register = .833, and vote = .824. The Eigenvalue for participation other than voting is 2.35 with 39.2% of the variance explained and a standardized 4-item alpha of .71.

5. The factor score for each of the indicators is as follows: citizenship intent = .616, naturalization = .819, and registration = .644. The Eigenvalue is 2.08 with 69.3 of the variance explained.

6. Another measure of marriage assimilation is whether a respondent ever married a person of another ethnicity or race. This is not possible here because in this Korean sample almost every married respondent (96% among all) had a Korean spouse. Besides, lacking information on the place and time of marriage, it is unrealistic to estimate outmarriage for a new immigrant group if most of the marriages took place in the homeland.

7. Oblique rotation is a conservative test of dimensionality. Principal components results using varimax rotation which assumes independence among variables, however, produce very similar structures.

8. The indicators of ethnicity used in each set of regression analyses and the dimension of ethnicity each represents are as follows: For citizen respondents in the entire sample, victim of hate crime (personal discrimination), perceive group condition bad (concern over group status), cross-racial friendship (acculturation/integration). For all respondents in the entire sample, interracial marriage replaces cross-racial friendship on the acculturation dimension; the rest are the same as for citizens. For citizen respondents in the Asian subsample, victim of hate crime (personal discrimination), know group leaders (concern over group status), perceive own group most deprived (group deprivation), and interracial marriage (acculturation). For all respondents in the Asian subsample, knowledge of group history replaces perception of own group being most deprived on the group deprivation dimension; the rest are the same as for Asian citizens.

CHAPTER 4
THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN A MULTI-ETHNIC SETTING: RESULTS OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SURVEY

Comparing Asian American to Other Ethnic Groups
in the Aggregate

The extent of participation for the Southern California sample is reported in Section I of Table 4-1. At the aggregate, the frequency results generally support the impression that Asians (and Latinos) participate at a rate much lower than whites or blacks--except that the naturalization rate of foreign-born Asians (42%) is much higher than that for Latinos (23%). However, when citizenship is controlled, the participatory disparity is significantly reduced--though it does not disappear--for registration and voting. Among the registered, Latino voting rate is as high as the rate for blacks and whites, but Asians still vote less. The rates of Asian participation in other activities (including campaign donations) are also low when compared to whites' (but higher than Latinos'), and citizenship status does not account for the difference.

A description of the sociodemographic background of the respondents can be found in Section II of Table 4-1. Not surprisingly, Asians are overrepresented in higher educational and income categories, exceeding even the levels

Table 4-1

Percentage Distributions of Political Participation and Its Possible Causes Across Ethnic Groups in Southern California, 1993

I. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
<u>Citizenship</u>				
Citizens	70%	67%	97%	97%
N=	221	199	144	646
<hr/>				
<u>Voter Registration</u>				
Registered	47 (68) *	43 (64)	84	84
-among registered-				
--Democrats	39	59	83	41
--Republicans	38	24	5	44
--Other Party	7	2	4	4
--No Party	16	15	8	11
N=	150	124	137	610
<hr/>				
<u>Voting</u>				
Voted in 1992	37 (53)	37 (55)	68 (71)	71 (74)
(among registered)	78	86	84	88
--Clinton (D)	46	58	84	39
--Bush (R)	44	28	6	39
--Perot	10	14	10	21
N=	100	82	110	492
<hr/>				
<u>Participation Other Than Voting</u>				
Participated	24 (27)	16 (18)	27	40
--Contact Official	11 (11)	9 (13)	10	24
--Contribute\$	12 (14)	5 (6)	9	21
--Attend Meeting	8 (10)	5 (5)	7	14
--Volunteer	9 (10)	5 (5)	15	14
N=	(varies)			

II. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

<u>Education</u>				
0-7th grade		7 (1)		
8th grade		5 (2)	1	1
9-11 grade	6 (4)	11 (10)	4	3
12th grade	10 (8)	23 (23)	20	16
Technical training	3 (3)	11 (14)	16	9
Some college	30 (33)	28 (35)	42	33
College degree	31 (31)	9 (9)	11	21
Some graduate work	8 (9)	3 (5)	1	4
Graduate degree	12 (12)	3 (2)	6	13
N=	218 (153)	198 (133)	142	646

Table 4-1--continued

	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
<u>Family Income</u>				
Less than \$10K	6 (3)	7 (4)	12	5
\$10K-\$19,999	10 (7)	24 (16)	23	11
\$20K-\$29,999	14 (14)	20 (19)	19	13
\$30K-\$39,999	17 (17)	20 (25)	14	20
\$40K-\$49,999	13 (15)	11 (13)	12	13
\$50K-\$59,999	9 (10)	11 (13)	11	11
\$60K or more	31 (34)	7 (10)	8	27
N=	203 (147)	186 (126)	133	593
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>Employment</u>				
Work full-time	45 (50)	55 (54)	50	42
Work part-time	8 (9)	12 (12)	7	8
Self-employed	8 (8)	5 (7)	8	13
Homemaker	5 (3)	14 (9)	4	8
Student	17 (14)	4 (4)	3	1
Look for work	9 (7)	5 (5)	6	4
Not look for work	1 (1)	1 (2)	1	1
Disabled	1 (1)	2 (2)	4	1
Retired	6 (7)	4 (6)	19	22
N=	220 (154)	199 (133)	144	646
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>Age</u>				
18-21	18 (15)	10 (10)	4	3
22-24	10 (10)	11 (7)	3	5
25-39	39 (35)	51 (49)	43	31
40-44	12 (14)	8 (8)	8	10
45-64	14 (17)	18 (21)	24	27
65+	7 (9)	3 (5)	19	25
N=	218 (153)	196 (132)	144	638
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>Length of Residence in Southern California</u>				
Fewer than 2yrs	5 (6)	2 (0)	1	2
2-5 yrs	15 (7)	11 (5)	8	6
6-10 yrs	20 (15)	12 (8)	7	8
11-15 yrs	16 (17)	11 (8)	8	7
16-20 yrs	11 (12)	9 (5)	18	9
20yrs+	14 (20)	19 (24)	33	40
Whole life	19 (26)	37 (51)	26	27
N=	220 (154)	199 (133)	144	646
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
<u>Immigration Generation</u>				
First generation	52 (42)	35 (23)	8	11
Second generation	34 (38)	40 (41)	6	15
Third or more gen.	14 (20)	25 (35)	86	74
N=	220 (154)	198 (133)	144	641

Table 4-1--continued

Gender	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
Female	48 (54)	48 (49)	62	53
N=	220 (154)	199 (133)	144	646

III. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

A. Group Consciousness

<u>Own Group Most Deprived</u>				
Asian	18 (15)	8 (5)	3	8
Latino	37 (40)	63 (54)	56	33
Black	35 (38)	42 (46)	78	25
Anglo	2 (3)	6 (6)	7	16
N=	221 (154)	199 (133)	144	646

Group Condition Bad

--percentages of those who think conditions are bad or very bad--

Asian	11 (10)	16 (19)	10	16
Latino	49 (48)	43 (41)	50	43
Black	45 (47)	46 (45)	67	47
Anglo	4 (4)	8 (10)	8	18
N=	(various)			

Racial Discrimination A Problem

Major	9 (7)	12 (9)	26	9
Moderate	25 (27)	34 (28)	25	28
Minor	43 (41)	32 (37)	27	37
No	24 (25)	22 (27)	22	26
N=	213 (149)	190 (127)	141	606

Personal Experience of Discrimination

Great deal	3 (5)	5 (3)	13	4
Fair	10 (11)	9 (9)	16	8
Some	51 (51)	36 (35)	47	31
None	37 (33)	50 (52)	25	58
N=	221 (154)	196 (130)	143	639

Ways Discriminated (among those being discriminated)

Jobs	20 (20)	27 (21)	42	20
Education	8 (6)	7 (8)	8	6
Housing	3 (3)	6 (6)	19	2
Government	10 (8)	5 (5)	3	7
Business	18 (22)	8 (8)	29	8
Neighbor	7 (7)	4 (4)	2	3
Stranger	30 (34)	14 (14)	15	11
N=	(various)			

Table 4-1--continued

	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
<u>Victim of Hate Crime</u>				
Victimized	18(17)	14(14)	18	12
N=	217(150)	198(132)	141	641
<u>Hear Racial Slurs About Asians</u>				
Very often	12(11)	13(14)	6	5
Fairly oft	14(13)	21(19)	12	10
Fairly infreq	26(28)	23(22)	26	28
Very infreq	48(48)	44(46)	56	57
N=	216(151)	195(133)	139	643
<u>Know Asian American Political Leaders</u>				
Name one+	38(42)	22(29)	24	26
Mike Woo	25(25)	21(26)	25	16
D. Inouye	9(13)	4(5)	2	11
Connie Chung	9(11)	9(7)	7	6
N=	221(154)	199(133)	144	646
<u>Know Asian American History</u>				
100+ years	58(63)	43(52)	57	66
N=	202(142)	162(122)	122	587
<u>Know Internment of Japanese Americans</u>				
Know	89(90)	85(86)	91	94
N=	187(136)	160(110)	118	609
<u>Support Reparation</u>				
Favor strg	59(63)	41(39)	32	42
Favor somwt	27(24)	29(28)	17	26
Oppo somwt	6(4)	14(14)	14	13
Oppo strg	8(9)	16(19)	36	19
N=	194(141)	176(119)	127	612

B. Acculturation/Integration

	<u>Cross-Racial Friendship</u>		
Asian		31(38)	34
Latino	57(64)		50
Black	54(62)	52(60)	61
Anglo	68(71)	35(36)	58
Any Group	85(88)	72(78)	68
N=	(various)		

Table 4-1--continued

	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
Interracial Marriage				
Appr strongly	14(14)	12(13)	16	12
Appr somewhat	7(7)	7(6)	4	8
Not care	70(69)	70(73)	75	59
Disapp somewhat	6(6)	5(4)	2	12
Disapp strongly	3(3)	6(5)	3	9
N=	207(147)	187(126)	140	611

Source: The Los Angeles Times Poll #318, August 7-10, 1993, released through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

*Entries in parentheses refer to the percentages among citizens.

for non-Hispanic whites. However, about one out of ten Asians--the highest ratio of the four ethnic groups--also reported being unemployed at the time of interviewing. Both the Asian and Latino groups were clearly younger than blacks or whites. About two-thirds of the respondents in the two recent immigrant groups reported as younger than 40; in contrast, those over 65 occupy a relatively small proportion in each of the two subsamples. In terms of the length of stay in the Southern California community, a higher percentage of Asians arrived within the last fifteen years than any other group, while over half of the respondents in the three non-Asian groups had lived in the area for at least twenty years. A similar trend is evident in the distribution of immigration generation across the groups. About half of all Asians were born outside of the United States, whereas at least two-thirds of blacks and whites had U.S.-born parents. The distribution of Latinos across generations is more even, with slightly over one-third of the subsample in each of the first two generations.

As to those socio-psychological indicators of ethnicity, Asians, like their white counterparts, were quite positive about their experiences in Southern California. Few Asians thought their own group suffers the most discrimination (18%) or had fewer opportunity to get adequate housing, education, or jobs (11%). Most of them did not think racial discrimination was a serious problem in the community (67%), though about two-thirds of them had

experienced at least some degree of personal discrimination, primarily from dealing with strangers (30%). Less than one-fifth of Asians (18%) reported having been victimized because of one's ethnicity, but a higher percentage of Asians (26%) heard racial slurs about Asians in interpersonal communications.

The development of ethnic group identity can also be indicated by one's knowledge about group immigration history and its prominent political leaders. About four out of ten Asians could name at least one prominent group political leader. Michael Woo was the most recognized personality; others included U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, March Fong Eu, and U.S. Representative Jay Kim. About six out of ten Asians knew the correct length of Asian immigration (58%), but a greater percentage of Anglos knew the Asian history (66%). One exemplary instance of the deprived Asian group status is the internment of Japanese Americans during the World War II. About 9 out of 10 persons of Asian origin knew this historical event and almost an equal percentage of Asians favored awarding reparation payments to those who were interned.

Another factor influencing the development of an ethnic group identity in America is acculturation/adaptation. This is when members of an ethnic group develop their sense of belongingness to the American community. Two of the stages in the adaptation of immigrant groups to the American society are structural and marital integration. Based on

these two accounts, Asians have a very high rate of social integration. The percentage of those persons reporting having a close friend of another race is as high as the Anglos' (85%); and only one out of ten Asians opposes the idea of having someone in the family marrying a person of a different racial or ethnic background.

Explaining Asian Participation in a Comparative Perspective

Our first question is whether Asian ethnicity matters for political participation. The logistic regression estimations of citizens' voting turnout and all respondents' participation other than voting across four ethnic groups are reported in Tables 4-2 and 4-3. As shown in column I, both Latinos and Asians can be predicted to turnout or participate less than whites simply by their self-identified ethnic group identity. Although blacks voted at a rate equal to whites, they tended to participate less than whites, too. Similar impact of the ethnic culture factor on the extent of other participation is observed in the multiple regression results in Table 4-4. Thus, when ethnic group culture is considered alone, Asian (pan)ethnicity, as well as Latino or even African American (pan)ethnicity, does matter for (the lack of) political participation.

To account for the participatory disparity between the white majority and the ethnic minorities, we first turn to socioeconomic factors. Results in column II of Tables 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4 indicate that, although education and income differences are crucial in determining turnout as well as

Table 4-2

Logistic Regression Estimations of Citizens' Registration
and Voting Participation in Southern California, 1993
(N=957)

Models	I	II	III	IV	Registration
<i>(1) Ethnic Culture</i>					
Constant	1.13*** (.10)	-1.61*** (.33)	-4.09*** (.52)	-4.59*** (.57)	-4.49*** (.63)
Black	-.22 (.22)	.10 (.23)	.17 (.24)	.17 (.25)	.47 (.30)
Latino	-.85*** (.21)	-.54* (.22)	-.38 (.23)	-.35 (.23)	-.46 (.25)
Asian	-1.02*** (.19)	-1.33*** (.21)	-1.12*** (.22)	-1.10*** (.22)	-.91** (.24)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education		.36*** (.06)	.41*** (.06)	.40*** (.06)	.42*** (.07)
Income		.15*** (.04)	.18*** (.05)	.17*** (.05)	.11* (.05)
Unemployed		-.43 (.31)	-.14 (.32)	-.15 (.32)	-.02 (.35)
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length			.20*** (.05)	.20*** (.05)	.22*** (.05)
Age			.024*** (.005)	.027*** (.005)	.038*** (.006)
Male			-.24 (.16)	-.24 (.16)	-.10 (.18)
<i>(4) Socio-psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination				.13 (.23)	.25 (.26)
Concern over Group Status				.28 (.16)	-.08 (.18)
Acculturation/Integration				.30 (.22)	.61* (.24)
Initial -2 Log Likelihood			1183 (I-IV)		978
At Converg.	1146	1057	1001	995	810
% Correct	69.17	72.41	75.65	74.92	81.30

Note: The dependent variable in models I-IV is scored 1 if the respondent reported voting for the president in 1992. Numerical entries are logistic coefficients except where noted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4-3
 Logistic Regression Estimations of Participation Other Than
 Voting in Southern California, 1993 (N=1094)

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
<i>(1) Ethnic Culture</i>					
Constant	-.42*** (.08)	-2.79*** (.32)	-3.40*** (.44)	-3.96*** (.49)	-3.90*** (.50)
Black	-.42* (.21)	-.15 (.22)	-.15 (.22)	-.17 (.23)	-.21 (.23)
Latino	-1.28*** (.22)	-.88*** (.23)	-.79*** (.24)	-.77** (.24)	-.63** (.24)
Asian	-.66*** (.18)	-.81*** (.19)	-.69*** (.20)	-.69*** (.20)	-.52* (.21)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education		.26*** (.05)	.27*** (.05)	.26*** (.05)	.23*** (.05)
Income		.15*** (.04)	.16*** (.04)	.17*** (.04)	.15*** (.04)
Unemployed		.13 (.30)	.22 (.31)	.19 (.31)	.16 (.32)
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length			.05 (.04)	.05 (.04)	.03 (.05)
Age			.007 (.004)	.010* (.005)	.006 (.005)
Male			-.15 (.14)	-.16 (.14)	-.14 (.14)
<i>(4) Socio-psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination				.59** (.19)	.58** (.19)
Concern over Group Status				.26 (.15)	.27 (.15)
Racial Integration/Acculturation				.24 (.20)	.19 (.21)
<i>(5) Legal</i>					
Naturalization/Citizenship ^a or Registration					.30 (.29) .82*** (.19)
Initial -2 Log Likelihood=1370					
At Converg.	1325	1254	1247	1233	1214
% Correct	68.10	70.02	70.29	71.30	71.66

Note: (see Table 4-2). The dependent variable is scored 1 if the respondent engages in any political activity other than voting and 0 otherwise.

^a The partial coefficient for citizenship is taken from a separate model. Compared to other coefficients in the model using registration (column V), the significance of Asian ethnicity increases to $p=.0018$ and age has a borderline impact ($p=.0523$), the rest are no different in either model.

Table 4-4

Multiple Regression Estimations of Participation Other Than Voting in Southern California, 1993 (N=1108)

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
<i>(1) Ethnic Culture</i>					
Constant	.58*** (.03)	-.30** (.10)	-.45*** (.13)	-.54*** (.14)	-.52*** (.14)
Black	-.21** (.08)	-.10 (.07)	-.09 (.07)	-.13 (.08)	-.14 (.08)
Latino	-.38*** (.07)	-.19** (.07)	-.15* (.07)	-.16* (.07)	-.14 (.07)
Asian	-.25*** (.06)	-.29*** (.06)	-.25*** (.06)	-.25*** (.06)	-.23*** (.07)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education	.100*** (.015)	.097*** (.015)	.095*** (.015)	.090*** (.015)	.090*** (.015)
Income	.059*** (.013)	.063*** (.013)	.068*** (.013)	.065*** (.013)	.065*** (.013)
Unemployed	-.062 (.099)	-.029 (.100)	-.048 (.099)	-.048 (.099)	-.048 (.099)
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length	-.004 (.014)	-.006 (.014)	-.013 (.014)	-.013 (.014)	-.013 (.014)
Age	.045** (.017)	.051** (.017)	.045* (.018)	.045* (.018)	.045* (.018)
Male	-.031 (.046)	-.041 (.046)	-.038 (.046)	-.038 (.046)	-.038 (.046)
<i>(4) Socio-psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination			.303*** (.064)	.301*** (.064)	.301*** (.064)
Concern over Group Status			.040 (.057)	.044 (.057)	.044 (.057)
Acculturation/Integration			.014 (.061)	.004 (.061)	.004 (.061)
<i>(5) Legal</i>					
Naturalization/Citizenship ^a					.014
or					(.080)
Registration					.112* (.057)
Adj-R ²	.03	.11	.12	.13	.14
F	13.62***	24.37***	17.18***	15.11***	14.29***

Note: Numerical entries are regression coefficients except where noted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

The dependent variable is scored by the summed value of participation in any of the activities other than voting and has a range between 0 and 4.

^a The coefficient for citizenship is taken from a separate model where other coefficients are similar to those in column V, except that Latino (p=.04) is also significant.

influencing the incidence and extent of participation in other types of activities, they are not sufficient to account for the turnout or participation deficit for Asians or Latinos. However, the reduction of the significance of the Latino ethnic label in two of the three cases indicates that the SES model is more useful for Latinos than for Asians. The disappearance of the significance of the black ethnic label for other participation demonstrates that the SES model works best for the black group. In contrast, after controlling for SES factors, the Asian turnout and participation deficit is even deeper than indicated by ethnic label alone.

The addition of demographic factors does not seem to help much in accounting for the under-participation of Asians, either. As shown in column III of Tables 4-2 to 4-4, the slope coefficients for Asian ethnicity are smaller than in the SES models but not smaller than the ethnicity models and they remain significant at $p=.001$ level. By comparison, the Latino citizens' disadvantages in length of stay and age, in addition to education and income, can help explain the differences between their turnout level and that of Anglo whites. None of the demographic factors has any impact on the incidence of Asian or Latino participation, but age seems to help account for the lesser degree of participation for Latinos.¹

Past research has indicated that the participation deficit of the Asians cannot be explained away by

sociodemographic and group consciousness variables. Judging from results shown in column IV of Tables 4-2 to 4-4, we agree with this assessment. The addition of socio-psychological factors changes little the slope coefficients of the Asian ethnicity and they remain highly significant, depressing turnout or participation in other activities.² Although none of the socio-psychological factors matter for voting turnout, controlling for personal experience of discrimination (being victimized) appears to help reduce the Latino deficit in the probability of participation in activities other than voting.

The last column in Tables 4-3 and 4-4 compares the effects of legal factors such as registration and citizenship status when differences in SES, demography, and socio-psychological factors are controlled. As hypothesized, being registered increases the likelihood and the rate of participation in activities other than voting. It also helps to reduce the participation deficit between Asians and whites beyond the ethnic group culture variable. Being or becoming a U.S. citizen does not, however, increase participation in activities other than voting. For citizens' voting turnout, we would like to estimate the effect of registration but are concerned about the possible violation of the statistical assumption of independence. A separate run using registration as a dependent variable (shown in the last column of Table 4-2) indicates that the determinants of registration are similar to those of voting,

but citizens who make more cross-racial friends are also more likely to register. Among those who are registered, another logistic regression result (not shown) indicates that their likelihood of voting can be negatively influenced by being an Asian and positively influenced by having more education, family income, and concern over group status.

In the end, these comparisons among ethnic groups indicate the degree of distinction of the Asian political participation. Despite controls over four different sets of factors that are often found to determine American political participation, Asians simply do not turnout or participate as much as the majority members of the society, let alone participate more because of their higher overall socioeconomical achievement. What then influences the probability and extent of Asian political participation? Can we conclude from results comparing Asians to other ethnic groups that SES and other factors do not have independent impacts on Asian turnout/participation?

Sorting Out Sources of Influence: Comparatively and Internally

Part of the answer can be visualized by charting out the relationships between education/income and voting/participation across ethnic groups (Figures 1 to 4): For Asians, the educational and income payoffs in voting turnout are the lowest among the four groups. However, within each of the four groups, more education generally has the predicted effect of facilitating turnout. A similar but

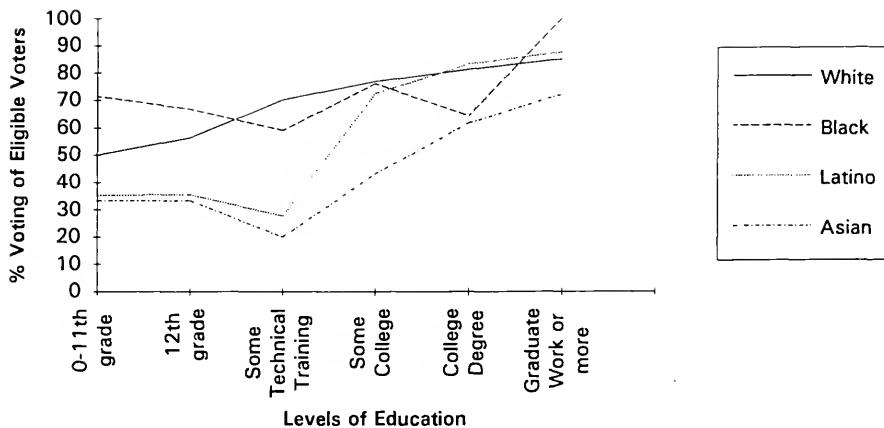


Figure 1
Voting of Ethnic Groups by Education

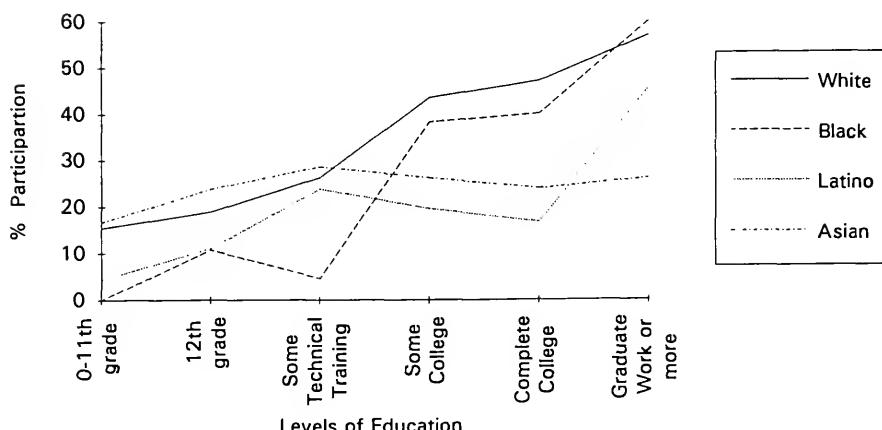


Figure 2
Participation of Ethnic Groups by Education

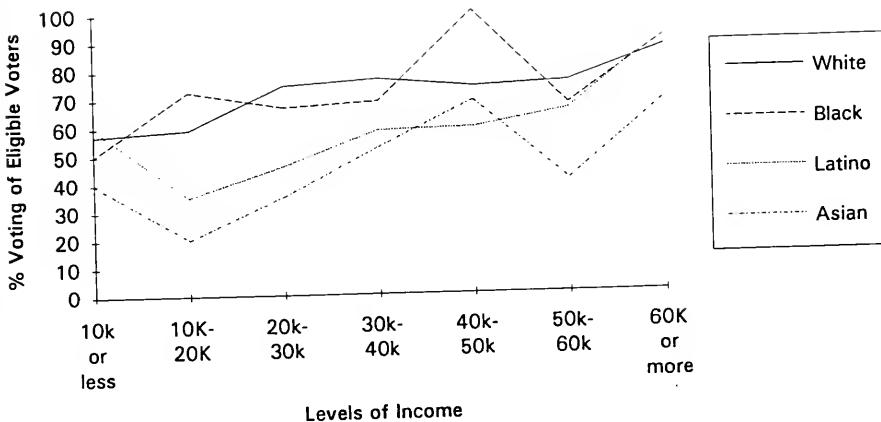


Figure 3
Voting of Ethnic Groups by Income

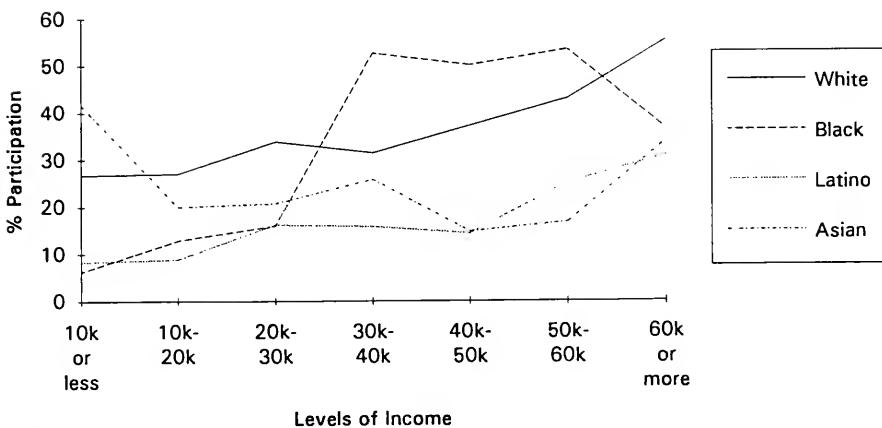


Figure 4
Participation of Ethnic Groups by Income

weaker case can be made for the income effect. Here for both Asians and Blacks, turnout peaks at the family income level of \$40K to \$50K but resurges at the \$60K or more level. In terms of the probability of participation in any of the four activities other than voting, education appears to have a very limited impact for Asians. Whereas those Asians who did not attend college seem to participate at a rate higher than their counterparts in other ethnic groups, those achieve higher educational status do not participate more. Relatedly, the effect of income for Asians is almost concave, with those having the lowest and highest level of income participating more, but generally at a rate lower than other ethnic groups when income level reaches \$40K. In sum, socioeconomic factors are less useful to explain Asian turnout or participation. Compared to other groups, the payoffs of educational and income increments are either low or none. Although more education is correlated with higher turnout rate for Asian citizens, the effect of education on other participation and the overall effect of income diverge greatly from the patterns for whites.

This observation on the usefulness of the socioeconomic factors to explain turnout and participation within the Asian group is supported by analyses using logistic and multiple regressions. As shown in column II of Tables 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7, when SES is considered along with Asian nationality, education is the only significant determinant and it only applies to turnout among citizens. However,

Table 4-5

Logistic Regression Estimations of Asian American
Citizens' Registration and Voting Participation in Southern
California, 1993 (N=131)

Models	I	II	III	IV	Registration
<i>(1) Asian Nationality</i>					
Constant	.53 (.34)	-2.72* (1.06)	-4.71** (1.48)	-8.53*** (2.03)	-6.45** (1.88)
Japanese	-.01 (.49)	.18 (.52)	-.36 (.63)	-.79 (.73)	-.46 (.78)
Korean	-.54 (.67)	-.32 (.72)	.04 (.78)	-.63 (.89)	-.84 (.90)
Vietnamese	-1.08 (.58)	-.91 (.62)	-.61 (.68)	-.59 (.77)	.07 (.75)
Filipino	-.32 (.51)	-.15 (.55)	-.14 (.57)	.35 (.65)	.29 (.67)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education	.37* (.16)	.37* (.17)	.29 (.19)	.08 (.19)	
Income	.14 (.12)	.14 (.12)	.34* (.15)	.35* (.16)	
Unemployed	.75 (.74)	.99 (.76)	1.02 (.81)	.36 (.79)	
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length	.18 (.13)	.10 (.14)	.09 (.14)		
Age	.015 (.014)	.040* (.018)	.058** (.020)		
Immigration Generation	.24 (.30)	.31 (.34)	.07 (.35)		
Male	.42 (.42)	.50 (.48)	.02 (.50)		
<i>(4) Socio-Psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination			1.29 (.75)	1.22 (.78)	
Concern over Group Status			1.10* (.50)	.89 (.51)	
Group Deprivation			1.68* (.83)	2.43* (1.01)	
Acculturation/Integration			2.13** (.79)	1.97** (.69)	
Initial -2 Log Likelihood		179 (I-IV)			163
At Converg.	175	162	157	134	149
% Correct	60.31	66.41	66.41	75.57	75.57

Note: The dependent variable in models I-IV is scored 1 if the respondent reported voting for the president in 1992. Numerical entries are logistic coefficients except where noted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4-6
 Logistic Regression Estimations of Asian American
 Participation Other Than Voting in Southern California, 1993
 (N=173)

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
<i>(1) Asian Nationality</i>					
Constant	-1.46*** (.35)	-2.21* (.93)	-2.45* (1.17)	-3.68** (1.38)	-2.96* (1.43)
Japanese	.73 (.48)	.78 (.49)	.77 (.53)	.86 (.56)	.90 (.57)
Korean	1.34* (.60)	1.48* (.62)	1.54* (.64)	1.32* (.66)	1.36* (.68)
Vietnamese	.31 (.59)	.36 (.61)	.44 (.62)	.44 (.66)	.33 (.65)
Filipino	-.12 (.57)	-.02 (.58)	-.06 (.59)	.10 (.62)	.01 (.63)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education	.04 (.13)	.05 (.14)	.06 (.15)	.06 (.15)	.04 (.15)
Income	.07 (.11)	.06 (.11)	.08 (.12)	.08 (.12)	.03 (.12)
Unemployed	.72 (.57)	.79 (.59)	.84 (.61)	.84 (.61)	.80 (.61)
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length		.04 (.11)	.01 (.12)		-.05 (.12)
Age		.005 (.014)	.007 (.014)		.000 (.015)
Immigration Generation		-.01 (.27)	-.07 (.29)		-.12 (.29)
Male		-.21 (.38)	-.27 (.40)		-.16 (.41)
<i>(4) Socio-Psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination			1.04* (.48)		.97* (.49)
Concern over Group Status			-.02 (.41)		-.14 (.42)
Group Deprivation			.37 (.41)		.23 (.42)
Integration/Acculturation			.95 (.70)		.73 (.71)
<i>(5) Legal</i>					
Naturalization/Citizenship ^a or					.64 (.57)
Registration					.90 (.48)
Initial -2 Log Likelihood=		197			
At Converg.	189	186	186	178	174
% Correct	74.57	74.57	74.57	77.46	78.61

Table 4-6--continued

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
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Note: (see Table 4-5) The dependent variable is scored 1 if the respondent engages in any political activity other than voting and 0 otherwise.

^a The partial coefficient for citizenship is taken from a separate model which uses citizenship as a legal factor. The coefficients for the other variables are virtually the same as in the legal model using registration.

Table 4-7
 Multiple Regression Estimations of Asian American
 Participation Other Than Voting in Southern California, 1993
 (N=175)

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
<i>(1) Asian Nationality</i>					
Constant	.26** (.09)	.10 (.26)	-.14 (.32)	-.359 (.332)	-.269 (.345)
Japanese	.07 (.13)	.09 (.14)	.01 (.15)	.049 (.147)	.050 (.147)
Korean	.36* (.18)	.40* (.19)	.42* (.19)	.324 (.186)	.327 (.186)
Vietnamese	.16 (.16)	.16 (.16)	.22 (.17)	.241 (.169)	.217 (.170)
Filipino	-.05 (.14)	-.04 (.15)	-.08 (.15)	.006 (.150)	-.005 (.150)
<i>(2) Socioeconomic Status</i>					
Education	.016 (.038)	.011 (.040)	.005 (.040)	.003 (.040)	
Income	.006 (.029)	.000 (.030)	.005 (.030)	.000 (.030)	
Unemployed	.172 (.172)	.210 (.174)	.184 (.171)	.179 (.171)	
<i>(3) Demographic</i>					
Length		.013 (.030)	.006 (.029)	-.001 (.030)	
Age		.049 (.039)	.055 (.038)	.047 (.039)	
Immigration Generation		.084 (.076)	.066 (.075)	.061 (.075)	
Male		-.084 (.107)	-.112 (.106)	-.101 (.107)	
<i>(4) Socio-psychological</i>					
Personal Discrimination			.459** (.141)	.449** (.142)	
Concern over Group Status			.054 (.108)	.040 (.109)	
Group deprivation			.132 (.105)	.117 (.107)	
Acculturation			.130 (.146)	.098 (.150)	
<i>(5) Legal</i>					
Naturalization/Citizenship ^a				-.040 (.138)	
Registration				.111 (.117)	
Adj-R ²	.010	.000	.004	.062	.061
F	1.45	1.00	1.06	1.77*	1.71*

Note: Numerical entries are regression coefficients except where noted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 4-7--continued

Models	I	II	III	IV	V
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* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

The dependent variable is scored by the summed value of participation in any of the activities other than voting and has a range between 0 and 4.

^a The coefficient for citizenship is taken from a separate model using citizenship as a legal factor. The rest of the coefficients in this model differ little from those in the model using registration.

when demographic and socio-psychological factors are included, column IV of Table 4-5 indicates that income may replace the role of education to determine turnout.

The usefulness of the demographic factors for Asians can be clarified by first comparing the effects of age and length of stay on voting and participation other than voting across ethnic groups. For Asian citizens, the impact of age is inconsistent (Figure 5). Whereas those between 22 and 24 turnout at a rate higher than their White counterparts, those over 40 do not turnout more than those who are in their early 20s. This is unlike the behavior of other ethnic groups. As for all Asians, the probability of participation does not seem to change much as one ages, except that those between age 45 and age 64 seem to be more active than others. Nevertheless, the Asian level of activism at all ages is consistently lower than that for whites (Figure 6). Among citizens, longer length of stay in Southern California appears to have stronger relationship with higher turnout for three minority groups than for whites, but the slope for Asians is not as sharp as for blacks or Latinos (Figure 7). Among all respondents, participation fluctuates over one's stay and Asians share a similar but higher level of participation with Latinos (Figure 8).

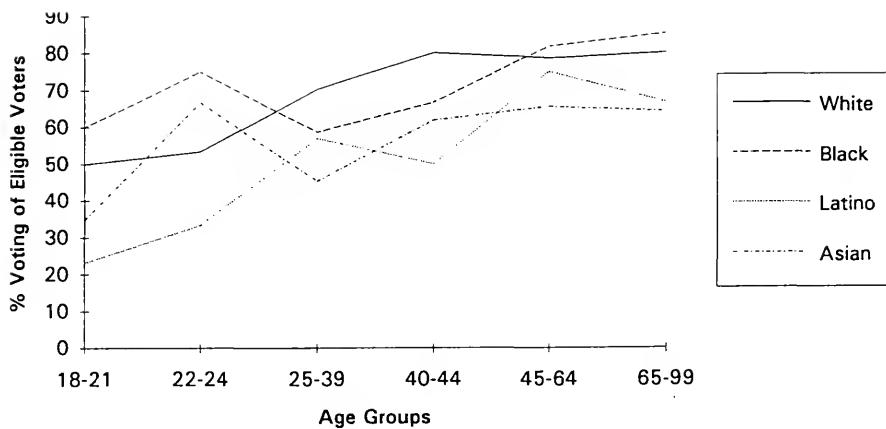


Figure 5
Voting of Ethnic Groups by Age

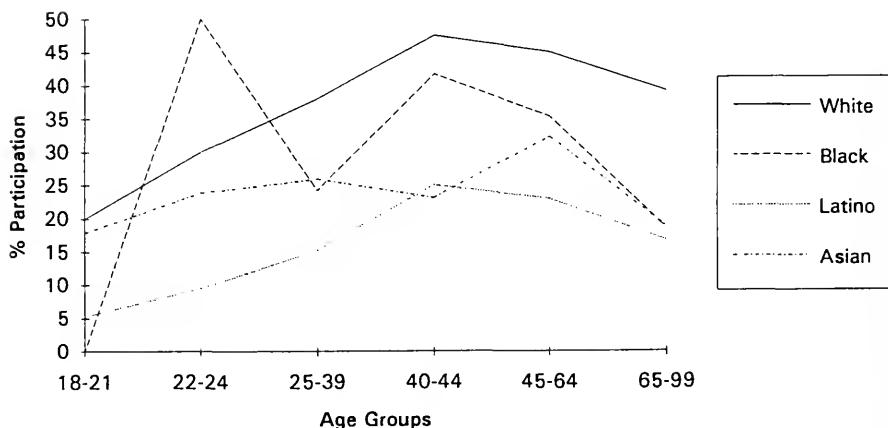


Figure 6
Participation of Ethnic Groups by Age

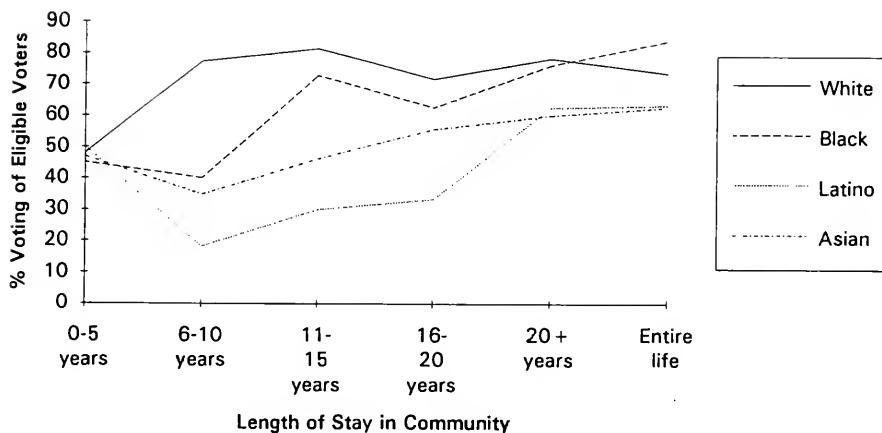


Figure 7
Voting of Ethnic Groups by Length of Stay

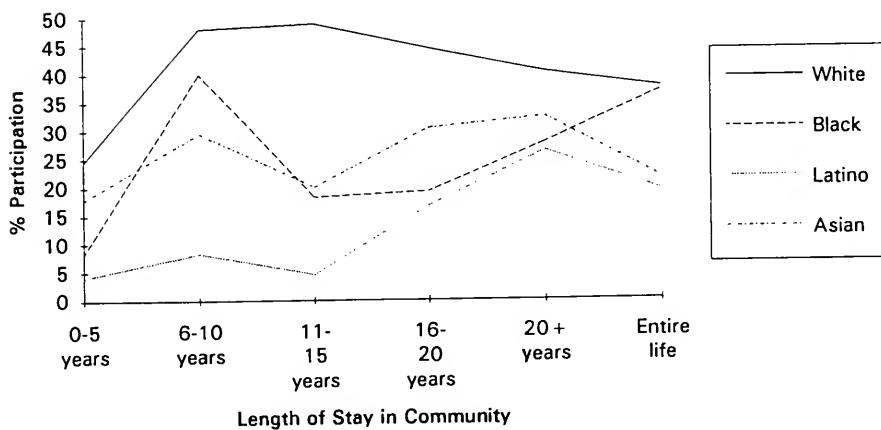


Figure 8
Participation of Ethnic Groups Length of Stay

What can be concluded from the discussion on the impact of demographic factors is that the patterns for Asians are not similar to those for whites. This may explain the lack of impact of the demographic variables to account for the Asian participation deficit among four groups of respondents. However, when age, length of stay, immigration generation, and gender were controlled along with socioeconomic and nationality factors, results from column III of the three Asian tables indicate that demographic factors are not useful to predict participation, either.³

Yet, age does have an impact on turnout when socio-psychological factors are taken into account. Among Asian citizens, those who are older, are more informed of their group political leaders, believe that the Asian group is the most discriminated against in the society, and do not oppose a family member marrying someone of another race are more likely to turnout to vote. The positive role of socio-psychological factors in explaining turnout among Asian citizens differs sharply from its negligible role in models where citizens of all four groups are included. The addition of socio-psychological factors also helps to explain the probability and extent of participation for Asians. Yet, of the socio-psychological factors shaping the influence of Asian ethnicity on participation other than voting, what matters for all Asians is the personal experience of being victimized because of one's race. This

is the same socio-psychological factor mobilizing participation for the entire sample, but it is also the only socio-psychological factor that has no influence on citizens' voting. Among all Asians, the indicator of personal discrimination helps account for the higher level of participation of Koreans as compared to the Chinese. It does not remove the difference in the likelihood of participation between the two nationality group, though the addition of the factor reduces the size of the Korean slope coefficient.

The comparative efficacy of the legal factors are reported in the last column of Tables 4-6 and 4-7. Unlike findings for the entire sample, neither citizenship nor registration has any impact on participation other than voting within the Asian sample when four other sets of factors are controlled. The lack of impact from the legal factors may be that the differences between citizens and noncitizens or registered and non-registered are already controlled by other variables in the models. The insignificance of citizenship status on participation may also be attributed in part to the dominance of a concern over family reunification rather than politics behind the quest for citizenship for recent immigrants from Asia (Portes and Rumbaut 1990). A logistic regression with the incidence of U.S. citizenship as the dependent variable (not shown) indicates that within the five Asian groups, citizenship is more likely among those who are from Vietnam,

male, older, have higher family income, longer length of stay, longer family history in the host country, and know about the Asian immigration history in the United States. Among Asian citizens, registration is more likely if one is older, has higher family income, know about the Asian immigration history, and do not oppose interracial marriage (last column of Table 4-5). These are the same factors explaining Asian turnout.

The diversity within the Asian group is a topic that receives increasing attention. How much can one predict the political participation of Asians by their different country of origin? Results from Table 4-5 indicate that Asian nationality does not matter much for turnout among citizens of five Asian groups in this Southern California sample. This is true whether nationality is considered alone or with other sets of factors. However, Asian nationality alone increases our ability to predict voting by 7%. Asian citizens with Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, or Filipino background do not turnout significantly less than their Chinese counterparts. Being Korean, though, makes one more likely to participate in any other activities than the Chinese. Being Korean also indicates higher level of participation in other activities, but the significance of the Korean factor disappears when the personal experience of being a victim of hate crime is taken into account. This seems to be a reasonable finding considering that the survey was taken after the traumatic Rodney King of 1992 and

that, as explained by Light and Bonacich (1988) on the prevalence of self-employed Korean immigrants in Los Angeles, Koreans were more heavily endowed with civic, social, political, and religious organizations within the ethnic community than the non-Koreans. More discussions on the similarity and uniqueness of the Korean American experience as compared to the pan-Asian American experience is the topic of the next chapter.

Summary

The preceding discussion in this chapter reveals a clear pattern--ethnicity does matter for political participation. Being an Asian significantly depresses one's likelihood to turnout to vote or to participate in other activities in comparison to non-Hispanic whites, and socioeconomic, demographic, socio-psychological, and legal factors do not matter much. However, this does not necessarily mean that these factors are not important for Asian turnout or participation. Within the Asian group, factors regarding one's income, age, and attitudes toward group identity can influence citizens' likelihood to vote and the probability and extent of participating in other activities can be increased by one's experience of discrimination. Among the five models of participation, socio-psychological is most useful to explain Asian turnout. This set of factors also seems to explain best the nationality differences in the extent of participation in activities other than voting. Whether a similar observation

on the roles of SES, demographic, and socio-psychological factors in political participation can be made with a specific Asian group is discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Age groups rather than raw age is used in multiple regressions so as to distinguish the possible impact due to the increment in age. Other possibilities to measure the age-related impacts such as age-square and older (65 and over)--to pick up the decline in participation in tail end--have been found insignificant to influence participation in all cases. In models where age is a significant factor, the addition of age-square also knocks off the significance of age.
2. I also tested the effects of all socio-psychological variables appearing in Table 4-1. The attempts failed to reduce the significance of the Asian ethnicity in either voting or other participation, too.
3. A similar procedure to test the effect of time-related variables was used for Asians. In addition, the effect of age, immigration generation, and length of stay was tested respectively and to no avail.

CHAPTER 5
ANOTHER LOOK OF ASIAN AMERICAN ETHNICITY: INTEGRATING KOREAN
AMERICANS IN LOS ANGELES, 1992

By far, the majority of the discussion on the construction of ethnicity has been at the panethnic group level. Although we have gained some knowledge about the relationships between ethnicity and political participation at this level, it is unclear that similar patterns would emerge if the concept of ethnicity is cast at the sub-Asian group level. In this chapter, one Asian nationality group, the Korean Americans, is examined to shed some light on the issue.

Similar to the forming of other Asian communities in the United States, the emergence of the contemporary Korean American community in the post-World War II era results from the convergence of forces among U.S. immigration policy, homeland government emigration policy, the political, social, and economic developments in both countries, the stationing of U.S. military personnel and the penetration of the American enterprise in the homeland, and revolutions in transportation and communication technologies (Kim 1981; Reimers 1985). According to Daniels (1990), the most visible group of Koreans in America resides in the bustling Koreatown in Los Angeles where numerous community and

cultural organizations exist among innumerable business enterprises. Being relatively new, well-educated, and with limited capital, a significant percentage of Korean immigrants have become self-employed, often starting small retail stores in low-income black and Latino areas while maintaining their homes in the suburbs, largely because of discrimination in the labor market and their limited English proficiency (Light and Bonacich 1988). However, the perception of Korean merchants taking money out of the black community deepened the anger of many African Americans who felt threatened by the increasing presence of the new immigrants in the traditionally black communities (Feagin and Feagin 1993; Chang 1994).

As described in Chapter 3, the data were collected from telephone interviewing a random sample of 750 adult Korean American residents mostly in Korean language in the Los Angeles County of California. Compared to the 1990 census of Koreans in the county, the respondents were overrepresented in being foreign-born and having higher education, about equally represented in having families with higher income, and underrepresented in citizenship status and voter registration. A detailed description of socioeconomic background and socio-psychological factors across levels of political participation appears in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1
 Percentage Distributions of Political Participation and Its
 Possible Causes Among Koreans in Los Angeles, 1992

I. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Citizenship (asked of all) N=750

Citizens 36%

Citizenship Intent (asked of noncitizens) N=485

Expect to 39%

Voter Registration (asked of citizens) N=265

Registered	51%
Democrats	44
Republicans	47
Other Party	0
No Party	9

II. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Expected to Become Naturalized	Noncitizens		Citizens		All %
	No%	Yes%	No%	Yes%	
<u>Education</u>					
0-7th grade	4	3	1	0	2
8th grade	5	2	1	0	3
9-11 grade	4	8	2	1	4
12th grade	30	28	25	10	25
Tech. training	7	4	8	7	7
Some college	7	15	11	11	10
College degree	38	37	45	60	42
Some grad. work	5	4	3	7	5
Graduate degree	1	0	3	4	2
N=	289	186	127	124	726

Place of Education

Korea	79	75	52	47	68
United States	2	3	15	36	11
Both	17	22	32	17	21
N=	295	186	130	134	745

Family Income

Less than \$10K	12	12	7	3	10
\$10K-\$19,999	18	18	12	4	14
\$20K-\$29,999	21	18	11	7	16
\$30K-\$39,999	16	11	15	20	15
\$40K-\$49,999	12	14	14	20	14
\$50K-\$59,999	6	16	20	14	12
\$60K or more	15	12	23	32	19
N=	224	156	108	118	606

Table 5-1--continued

Expected to	Noncitizens		Citizens		All %
	No%	Yes%	No%	Yes%	
<u>Employment</u>					
Work full-time	38	40	52	52	44
Work part-time	10	8	10	11	10
Self-employed	9	8	13	13	10
Homemaker	23	21	12	10	18
Student	13	17	8	8	12
Look for work	2	1		1	1
Not seek work	1	1	1		1
Retired	4	4	3	5	4
N=	297	187	131	132	748
<u>Age</u>					
18-27	20	26	24	18	22
28-37	32	27	33	20	29
38-49	21	18	24	31	22
50-64	16	14	11	22	16
65+	11	16	8	9	11
N=	297	186	127	132	742
<u>Years of Stay in the United States</u>					
0-5	47	41	2	0	29
6-10	35	38	33	11	31
11-15	14	10	38	26	19
16-20	4	5	23	43	15
21+	0	5	4	19	5
N=	297	186	127	132	746
<u>Nativity/Nationality</u>					
Korea-born	100	100	99	90	98
U.S.-born	0	0	0	2	0
N=	298	186	131	132	748
<u>Gender</u>					
Female	56	50	60	34	51
N=	298	187	131	134	749
III. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS					
A. Group Consciousness					
<u>Relative Group Condition</u>					
Better	70	71	78	72	72
Worse	7	6	8	12	8
Same as	23	23	14	17	20
N=	280	180	124	128	712

Table 5-1--continued

	Noncitizens		Citizens		All %
	Expected to Become No%	Naturalized Yes%	Registered No%	to Vote Yes%	
<u>Victim of Hate Crime</u>					
Never	77	69	81	82	76
Race-related	18	28	16	16	20
Unrelated	6	3	3	2	4
N=	286	181	131	129	728
<hr/>					
<u>Personal Experience of Discrimination</u>					
Not at all	56	61	54	40	54
Some, not much	33	27	38	48	35
A fair amount	9	9	8	8	9
A great deal	2	3	1	4	3
N=	278	176	126	127	707
<hr/>					
<u>Ways Discriminated</u>					
None	47	50	44	46	49
Jobs	11	9	12	17	12
Education	10	8	6	2	7
Government	9	8	6	3	7
Business	10	8	7	11	8
Strangers	10	16	22	18	14
N=	274	183	121	133	678
<hr/>					
<u>Primary Barrier for Group</u>					
Nothing	2	1	5	4	3
Racism	16	25	19	22	20
Language	54	48	45	46	49
Lack interest	8	6	9	7	7
Culture	16	17	21	17	17
No job train.	1	3	2	2	2
N=	280	182	130	129	721
<hr/>					
B. Acculturation/Integration					
<hr/>					
<u>English Fluency</u>					
Not at all	20	14	4	2	12
Not well	42	42	26	17	35
Just well	31	40	47	42	38
Very well	7	5	24	39	15
N=	296	185	130	134	745
<hr/>					
<u>Language Use</u>					
Only English		1	6	11	3
Mostly English	7	4	21	18	11
Equally	26	34	40	41	33
Mostly Korean	26	28	22	18	24
Only Korean	42	33	11	12	29
N=	298	186	131	132	747
<hr/>					

Table 5-1--continued

	Noncitizens		Citizens		All %
	Expected to Become Naturalized No%	Yes%	Registered to Vote No%	Yes%	
<u>Media Use</u>					
Only English	1	3	11	13	5
Mostly English	15	14	22	32	19
Equally	31	34	31	38	33
Mostly Korean	24	23	24	5	20
Only Korean	29	27	11	12	22
N=	298	187	131	134	749
<u>Business Contacts</u>					
Only Non-Kor.	11	7	16	18	12
Mostly Non-Kor	17	24	39	28	24
Equally	28	25	23	29	26
Mostly Korean	20	23	16	19	19
Only Korean	23	22	7	6	16
N=	282	179	131	132	724
<u>Speaking with Whites</u>					
None	26	20	9	8	18
1-5	23	30	26	20	25
5-10	11	22	11	8	13
10-25	21	12	15	11	16
25+	19	17	39	54	28
N=	289	185	130	132	736
<u>Interracial Marriage</u>					
Strong disap.	30	18	17	18	23
Somewhat dis.	14	14	16	8	13
Don't care	7	4	3	10	6
Somewhat appr.	38	47	30	35	38
Strong approve	11	18	34	29	20
N=	286	177	126	130	719
<u>Cross-racial Friendship</u>					
Yes	54	61	70	81	63
N=	298	187	131	134	744
<u>Religious Affiliation</u>					
Church Member	66	74	71	80	72
N=	297	187	128	134	745
<u>C. Attachment to Ethnic Culture</u>					
<u>Importance of Preserving Korean Culture</u>					
Not very imp.	4	3	6	8	5
Fairly imp.	18	11	18	22	17
Very imp.	78	85	75	71	78
N=	288	186	130	134	737

Table 5-1--continued

	Noncitizens		Citizens		All %
	Expected to Become Naturalized No%	Yes%	Registered to Vote No%	Yes%	
<u>Importance of Koreatown</u>					
Not at all	5	0	5	6	4
Not as imp.	12	20	14	22	16
One of many	31	33	43	24	32
Most import.	43	37	36	45	40
Live in it	9	10	3	4	7
N=	290	183	130	132	734
<u>Racial Makeup of Neighborhood</u>					
Mostly White	36	30	37	62	39
Mostly Black	2	3	5	2	3
Mostly Latino	6	22	4	6	9
Mostly Korean	19	12	10	3	13
Mostly Asian	7	5	11	8	7
Mixed	27	26	29	17	25
N=	297	187	131	132	747
<u>Expect to Return to Korea</u>					
Yes	35	15	11	6	20
N=	276	174	119	128	697

Source: The Los Angeles Times Poll #267, February/March 1992, released through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Preliminary Observations from Summary Statistics

Within the entire sample, only about one-third (36%) has gone through the naturalization process and become U.S. citizens, although two-fifth of the noncitizens expected to become citizens in the near future. Of the 265 citizens, about one-half registered to vote. These rates are far lower than those reported in Table 4-1 (70% citizenship and 68% registration) for Asians as a whole. The survey did not contain turnout rate for the past presidential election (it would have been four years old anyway). However, if the results reported in the last chapter for Asians in Southern California could be an indication, determinants for Korean American voting turnout should not be much different from those for voting registration.

As noted, this sample, like the Asian sample from six counties, contains a very high percentage of college-educated people. Higher educational achievement, nevertheless, has not been found to increase the likelihood of participation for Asians. Part of the reason may be that these respondents did not attend schools in the United States. Seven out of ten Koreans reported having education only in Korea. At the bi-variate level, the percentage of having education in Korea decreases as one became more engaged in the political system. However, higher education appears to be associated with greater political involvement. Similar correlations can also be observed with having higher

income, greater length of residence, and being employed, male, but not with being older. Compared to Asians in Table 4-1, income and age for this sample of Koreans were more evenly distributed. The median family income of Koreans (\$30K-40K) was lower than that for Asians in general (\$40K-50K); whereas an average Korean respondent was about five years older (40.5) than the Asian respondents in the other survey. A roughly equal percentage of respondents in both surveys reported being employed, but the percentage of housekeeper was higher and that for unemployment was lower in the Korean sample. As is expected for a foreign-born immigrant group, more Koreans were in the shorter length of stay categories (mean=10 years) and far fewer Koreans had lived for over 20 years in the U.S. community.

The interviews were completed just one month prior to the Rodney King Riot in South Central Los Angeles where the depth of the multi-racial/ethnic tension shocked the entire nation. The timing of and the questions asked in this survey allows one to estimate the degree of tension as

perceived by Korean Americans living in the region.

Appendix F summarizes results of a selected group of items exploring the inter-group relations between Korean Americans and other ethnic minorities. Responses to these survey items, though not pursued in later analyses, provide a general context for understanding the meanings of group

consciousness and ethnicity which are part of the main interests of this study.

On the eve of the Riot, many Korean respondents were concerned about tensions in race relations, but they generally did not predict a worsening situation. Many attributed responsibility to both Koreans and blacks, but more thought that the news media had exaggerated the amount of conflict. Indeed, three out of four respondents were satisfied with the current way of life and racial tensions lagged behind economic recession and crime to be considered as the most important problem in the region. However, the respondents had fewer contacts with blacks and a much more negative view of blacks than of Latinos.

Among the possible indicators of group consciousness, the condition of Koreans was judged to be mostly better off than other minorities in Southern California, but three out of ten respondents felt that the relative group condition of Koreans was about as bad or even worse off. Two out of ten respondents reported having been verbally or physically abused because of their race. Of the 47% of respondents that have experienced at least some form of discrimination, the majority did not perceive the amount to be great. About one-third attributed the source of discrimination to strangers in a public place, with a smaller proportion reporting incidents in the workplace. Yet, racism and discrimination was serious enough to be considered by 20% of

Koreans as the primary barrier to group success in Southern California.

A similar proportion of Asian respondents reported having fallen victim to hate crimes or being discriminated against a fair amount to a great deal in the six-county survey reported in Table 4-1. The sources of discrimination also appeared to order in a similar fashion in both surveys. Yet, although a higher percentage of Koreans expressed no experience of discrimination at all, three times more respondents in the Korean survey found their group condition to be no better than other minority groups. It seems that, for this new group of minority members, a linkage has not yet been made between discriminatory experience and feelings of group deprivation.

Perhaps consequentially, a clear pattern does not exist between group consciousness and involvement across levels of participation. Those who were not naturalized seemed to be more likely to fall victim to race-related crimes and perceive own group condition to be as bad as other minorities, but they were also more likely to report no experience of discrimination. Registered voters, though more likely to perceive an inferior group condition relative to other minority groups and having had more experience of discrimination, were less likely to name racism as the primary barrier than those who expected to become citizens. Moreover, though the registered seemed to experience more

discrimination in workplace and social situations involving strangers, they were less likely to experience discrimination in education and government areas than the less integrated. These observations caution one against making an unidimensional assumption of immigrant group consciousness and its relationship to political participation.

The story seems to run differently with the possible indicators of acculturation and social integration where they generally correlate with levels of participation. For instance, higher percentages of fluency in and usage of English are found among those who were naturalized and/or registered to vote. A similar pattern is found with indicators of cross-cultural friendship, support of interracial marriage, church membership, and mainstream business or other contacts. Yet, a relatively large percentage of the respondents have low acculturation. Close to half of the sample said that they were not at all fluent or not fluent enough in English. More than four out of ten Koreans relied mostly or exclusively on their native tongue for communication with others and with the outside world. With the exception of the near absence of outmarriage, the general level of structural integration seems to be quite high, with 63% of respondents having friends of other races and 72% being a member of a religious congregation. Still, about two out of five respondents did not speak with a

single mainstream White person in an average week; a slightly smaller percentage of respondents reported to have conducted business and financial transactions exclusively with Koreans; and some 23% of Koreans staunchly opposed to the idea of intermarriage.

Relatedly, a large majority of Koreans perceived the preservation of ethnic culture as highly important. An equal amount of the sample thought Koreatown in Los Angeles is the most or one of the most important place(s) as a business, cultural, and social center. Beyond the issue of social desirability with value-laden items in a survey, this (and other) strong showing of attachment to ethnic culture is impressive, given that except for a small portion (13%) of the respondents all others lived within non-Korean neighborhoods. This observation on residential patterns may be treated as another indication of strong integration potential. Yet, for foreign-born immigrants, residing among own ethnics can significantly limit exposure and access to the mainstream. The result may be a reinforcement of identification with the homeland culture and an isolation from the mainstream culture. Residing in Korean neighborhoods is therefore treated separately from structural integration. Attachment to the homeland ethnic culture, and perhaps isolation from the mainstream, can also be estimated with the intent to return to the home country. Among this sample of Koreans, one out of five persons

expected to end up in Korea in the years to come. The level of intent and the likelihood to reside in a Korean neighborhood are highest among the least involved. On the contrary, there is no clear pattern of a relationship between political participation and the perceived importance of Korean culture and Koreatown.

The Structure of Korean Immigrant Ethnicity

A few authors have done extensive research on the construction of Korean American ethnicity (Hurh 1980; Hurh and Kim 1984a, 1984b; Kim and Hurh 1993). The main conclusion from these studies is that the adaptation processes of Korean immigrants to the United States do not fall into either the assimilation or pluralism paradigm. Rather, they follow an additive mode of adaptation where the attachment to ethnic lifestyles and social network is not affected by the length of stay, despite the progress in acculturation over time. This is consistent with the discussion in previous chapters about the multiple processes underlying the concept of Asian American ethnicity. However, this study examines a fuller set of factors and adopts a different approach than previous studies by Hurh and others.

Result of the principal component analysis with oblique rotation is reported in Table 5-2. In general, the result confirms the hypothesis that Korean American ethnicity is a multi-layered concept. Similar to findings for Asians in

Table 5-2
 Principal Component Analysis of Ethnicity Among Koreans in
 Los Angeles, 1992

Variable	Oblique Rotated Components ^a (N=661)						Communality ^b
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
<i>Acculturation</i>							
English Use	.855						.747
Fluency	.823						.712
Media Use	.792						.647
Speak w/ White	.724						.563
Busi. Contact	.674						.488
Friendship	.666						.496
<i>Attachment to Ethnic Culture</i>							
Preserve Culture		.779					.651
Value Koreatown		.738					.599
<i>Detachment from Mainstream Culture</i>							
Expect to Return			.621			.337	.539
Korean Neighbors			.621				.556
Intermarriage				-.607			.522
<i>Group Deprivation</i>							
Racism Main Barrier					-.711		.548
Group Cond. Worse		-.314			.360	-.438	.335
							.512
<i>Personal Discrimination</i>							
Victim of Hate Crime					-.775		.656
Racially Discriminated					-.681		.563
Church Membership						-.875	.800
Eigenvalue	3.70	1.46	1.23	1.10	1.08	1.03	
Variance (%)	23.1	9.1	7.7	6.9	6.8	6.4	

Source: The Los Angeles Times Poll # 267 released through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

^a Loading scores greater than .30 or smaller than -.30.

^b A communality in factor analysis shows how much variance of an observed variable is accounted for by the common factor. It is calculated by summing the squared factor loadings of a variable.

the Southern California sample, Korean American ethnicity consists of dimensions of acculturation, personal discrimination, and group deprivation. The availability of additional items in the dataset also allows the detection of three other dimensions: attachment to ethnic culture, detachment from mainstream culture, and church membership. However, our understanding of the structure of immigrant ethnicity is advanced when the composition of each of the dimensions and their interrelationship is carefully examined.

In earlier discussions, acculturation is hypothesized to be indicated by the level of proficiency in the mainstream language (English Fluency) and the frequency of its application in daily use (Language Use, Media Use); possible indicators of structural integration, on the other hand, include cross-ethnic/racial friendship, church membership, business contacts and oral communication with members of the mainstream group. The principal component result shows that, except for church membership, indicators for the two dimensions can be explained by the same underlying factor. The distinctive role of church membership in the construction of ethnicity is an interesting finding. Although the survey did not distinguish between membership with an English or Korean church, past studies have found that most Koreans would attend Korean churches and that Christian churches,

especially Protestant churches, are dominant in organizing and leading community activities including nonreligious, secular ones (Kim 1981). The dual role performed by the churches as a bridging organization between their congregations and the larger society and as a guardian of ethnic culture and tradition may explain the separate and negative coefficient for church membership in the analysis.

For the dimension of ethnic attachment, although it has previously been conceived to compose of perceived importance of the ethnic enclave and the preservation of ethnic culture as well as one's residing in ethnic neighborhood and the intent of returning to homeland, only responses to the first two items load into the hypothesized dimension. A second dimension, detachment from mainstream culture, consists of the other two items along with the opposition to intermarriage. This not only indicates that factors shaping one's attachment to ethnic culture are structurally different from those influencing one's alienation from the dominant culture, but that there is not a zero-sum relationship between acculturation and ethnic attachment or mainstream detachment.

Consistent with findings in the previous chapter, the four indicators of group consciousness can be broken down into two dimensions--perception of group deprivation and personal experience of discrimination. However, both dimensions now have negative coefficients--indicating that

forces explaining the forging of the dimensions of acculturation, ethnic attachment, and mainstream detachment are likely to negatively influence the formation of group consciousness. This is different from principal component findings for Asian American ethnicity (Tables 3-2 and 3-3) where the dimension of group deprivation has an opposite sign to the dimension of personal discrimination.

For multiple regression analysis, a summed index of acculturation is created by taking the average of the six indicators (i.e., language use, media use, English fluency, speaking with Whites, business contacts, and cross-racial friendship; $\alpha=.83$). Because of the lack of additivity for each of the other dimensions as indicated by their low alpha values, only variables with the top absolute loading coefficient in each dimension (i.e., preserve culture, expect to return, racism main barrier, victim of hate crime) plus intermarriage are entered in the following analysis.

Results from Multiple Regression Analysis

What explains greater political integration at the individual level for Koreans in Los Angeles? Table 5-3 lists the results from three models of participation. In the basic socioeconomic model, having a higher level of education, more income, and being employed can all significantly increase participation. This appears to be in sharp contrast to the findings of the comparable models for the Asian sample in Tables 4-5 to 4-7 where education is the

Table 5-3
 Multiple Regression Estimations of the Political
 Participation of Koreans in Los Angeles, 1992 (N=541)

Models	I	II	III
(1) Socioeconomic			
Constant	.053 (.181)	-.108 (.194)	-.695 (.346)
Education	.066* (.032)	.036 (.026)	.030 (.026)
Income	.137*** (.027)	.036 (.023)	.026 (.023)
Employed	.216* (.109)	.082 (.089)	-.031 (.089)
(2) Demographic			
Length of Stay		.103*** (.007)	.091*** (.007)
Age		-.066 (.038)	-.044 (.040)
US Education		.210* (.099)	.118 (.101)
Female		-.113 (.076)	-.199* (.077)
(3) Socio-psychological			
Group Deprivation			.169 (.074)
Personal Discrimination			-.125 (.090)
Attachment to Ethnic Culture			.045 (.066)
Church Membership			.055 (.082)
Detachment from Mainstream			-.315** (.095)
Support Intermarriage			.088*** (.025)
Acculturation			.178** (.064)
Adjusted R ²	.104	.435	.472
F	21.93	60.43	35.41

Source: (see Table 5-2)

Note: The dependent variable is scored 3 if respondent is registered to vote. It is scored 2 if respondent is naturalized but not registered. It is scored 1 if respondent is not naturalized but expects to become one in the next few years. * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Numerical entries are unstandardized regression coefficients except where noted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

only socioeconomic variable to increase participation (turnout for citizens). However, the impact of socioeconomic factors disappears with the addition of demographic factors measuring one's length of stay, age, gender, and place of education.

In a manner consistent with Converse's (1969) speculation, length of stay for this group of immigrants from Korea is a much more powerful predictor of participation than age.¹ Again, this finding diverts greatly from that for the five groups of Asians. It is possible that, for the foreign-born generation alone, length of stay in a new country conveys more information than age about one's potential to participate. This proposition, nevertheless, is not supported by analyzing only the foreign-born Asians in the six-county survey (not shown) where length of stay has no impact on indicators of participation when age and other variables are controlled. This leads one to speculate that, perhaps, it is not nativity or immigration generation per se but being of Korean origin that distinguishes the role of length of stay between Pan-Asian and Korean American participation.

For Koreans, having attended schools in the States may increase political involvement, whereas being female does not seem to depress participation in any significant way, when other socio-demographic variables are controlled. The relationship of the two variables reverses itself, though,

when socio-psychological factors underlying the construction of ethnic identity are controlled. This finding of the net negative effect of women is contrary to the net insignificant role of gender in the pan-Asian studies. It indicates that, for political integration, Korean-born women may not be so much disadvantaged in socioeconomic and demographic background as in ethnic group identity and consciousness.

Besides being female, one's detachment or expectation to leave the host country and return to the homeland can also depress participation. On the contrary, being more acculturated and supportive of intermarriage can mobilize participation. None of the other socio-psychological factors matter much for participation except the perception of group deprivation (seeing racism as a barrier to success) which has a border line significance ($p=.07$). This again differs from findings for the survey taken 18 months after the Riot where being a victim of hate crimes can increase participation in activities other than voting and where gender does not matter. In the latter survey, though, the perception of group deprivation and acculturation/integration (support for intermarriage) can also increase the likelihood of registration or voting. These continuities and differences in the meanings and roles of ethnicity in immigrant political participation and

integration demonstrate vividly the contextual and complex nature of the concept and the process.

Across models, the explanatory power jumps from .10 to .44 when length of stay and place of education are taken into consideration. It continues to improve with the addition of certain socio-psychological factors, but the difference in R-square is much smaller and place of education no longer matters much. This implies that length of stay is the most decisive factor in influencing the extent of Korean American integration into the American system, followed by gender and some indication of immigrant adaptation. By comparison, basic socioeconomic status, group consciousness, ethnic attachment, and church membership matter little.²

Summary

The chapter begins with a question asking if a similar concept of ethnicity and its relationship to participation can be found when we focus the attention on a group of Asian immigrants from Korea rather than on the composite Asian sample discussed in Chapter 4. Although the two surveys are not comparable in many ways, they both indicate that the structure of ethnicity is multi-faceted and that being more acculturated does not necessarily lead to being less concerned over ethnic group interests or culture. In addition, both indicate that socioeconomic status is not important to influence participation when controlling

demographic and socio-psychological factors underlying the structuring of ethnicity. However, the different roles of age, length of stay, gender, and victims of hate crime between the two studies are sufficient evidence to call for more research.

Notes

1. The impact of age here is measured in terms of five age groups. Their distribution is reported in Table 5-1. The findings are virtually the same when raw age is used, except that the coefficients for age are much smaller. The control for one's being older in age (over 65) is highly insignificant and the exclusion of it does not change findings. Another variation indexing the impact of time, percentage of political life in the United States (length/age), is significant but the overall explanatory power of the models is smaller than that using length of stay.
2. This is confirmed in a trimmed-down model of participation (Table 5-4) where every variable that has not shown any closeness to significance is removed one at a time under the condition that the relationship among other variables in the fuller model remains the same and the F-score for the reduced model gets larger.

Table 5-4
 A Simplified Multiple Regression Model of the Political
 Participation of Koreans in Los Angeles, 1992
 (N=548)

Constant	-.154
	(.188)
Education	.025
	(.032)
Income	.030
	(.021)
Length of Stay	.087***
	(.006)
US Education	.155
	(.088)
Female	-.175*
	(.074)
Group Deprivation	.166
	(.094)
Detachment from Mainstream	-.305**
	(.094)
Support Intermarriage	.084***
	(.025)
Acculturation	.193**
	(.058)
Adjusted R ²	.472
F	55.23

Note: (see Table 5-3)

CHAPTER 6 DOES (UNDER-) PARTICIPATION MATTER?

An important concern in democratic politics is the meanings of participation. Scholars generally agree that there are three normative values of participation: legitimacy, instrumentalism, and self-development (Bennett and Resnick 1990). Participation, first of all, is assumed to enable the system's legitimacy and stability by establishing a link between public opinion and public policy. Second, participation can promote representation by allowing citizens to have a say in the decisions of public policies. Third, participation may facilitate the development of deliberative and moral character which is intrinsic to democratic citizenship.

With the trend of turnout decline in American politics, the empirical effects of nonparticipation has been pushed to the center stage in recent decades. Ironically, except the findings that nonvoters tend to have lower socioeconomic status and be slightly more liberal on domestic economic policies, little significant difference has been found between voters and nonvoters on the issues of public policy (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Shaffer 1982; Bennett and Resnick 1990; Petrocik and Shaw 1991; Gant and Lyons 1992; Teixeira 1992; Verba, Lehman, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie

1993a). However, it may be premature to conclude that nonparticipation does not matter. In their seminal work on political participation and social equality, Verba and Nie (1972) noted that, although leaders might be considered responsive by adopting the same agenda for community action as that of the citizenry, their level of responsiveness was much higher in communities with greater rates of participation, where there was also a wide gap between policy agendas/preferences and the responsiveness received by active and inactive citizens. In another study separated by more than two decades, Verba and his associates (1993a) again found participation, especially in activities beyond voting, to matter. Those whose preferences and needs became visible to policymakers through participatory activities were observed to differ from their more quiescent counterparts in their demographic attributes, economic needs, and the government benefits they received.

Does (under-)participation matter for respondents of Asian origin? This is a logical concern following the discussions on the levels and determinants of Asian American participation. After all, the low level of participation of Asian Americans may not be as severe a concern if participants differ little from nonparticipants in terms of sociodemographic outlook and political orientations. However, for Asians or any other ethnic groups with a significant proportion of non-native borns, the issue of

nonvoting is complicated by one additional involuntary factor--noncitizens are prohibited by law from registering to vote, even though they may perform the same levels of economic and political activities outside of the voting booth.¹ Participation in activities other than voting, on the other hand, may not necessarily signify a higher level of political activism. For even though participation in activities such as contacting officials, making campaign contributions, attending meetings and the sort may demand more time, money, and skills and thus more "difficult" than voting, this kind of participatory activities is actually more accessible than voting to noncitizens in groups with a large segment of foreign-born members. This is one instance to demonstrate that the nature of low or no participation and its implications may be different for Asian Americans than for the American electorate as a whole (such as presented by the National Election Studies Series).

Further, particularly for groups with a significant proportion of recent immigrants, the value of active participation in American politics is not without controversy. An author pointed out that the "allegiant and nonparticipatory disposition of the first generation insulates the United States from the ideological dissonance that immigrants portend" and helps promoting democratic stability (Harles 1993, 206). This resonates the views of Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) that "the apathetic

segment of America probably has helped to hold the system together and cushioned the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change" (322). The position may also derive from the disputable assumption that recent foreign-born immigrants hold different and anti-democratic political orientations from the native-borns.

In this chapter, the meanings of different types of Asian American participation and its consequences are examined in the aggregate using selected items in the six-county survey of Southern Californians. The analysis compares the sociodemographic outlook, immigrant minority group experience, information level, and political orientations between participants and nonparticipants within the Asian sample. In addition, the opinions of Asian voters are compared to those of voters in other ethnic groups. Further, it compares the degree of discrepancy in policy opinions and other political orientations between voters and nonvoters across the four ethnic groups in the survey. The four policy items examined are: college admission of Asians, banning legal immigration for three years, hearing of asylum cases for Chinese boat people, and awarding reparation to Japanese Americans interned during WWII. These are important immigration and domestic issues that have generated heated debates both within and between Asian and other ethnic communities in Southern California.

The Meaning of Participation--Within Asians

Within the Asian sample, how much do voters differ from nonvoters in terms of a number of sociodemographic attributes? In the micro-level analysis presented in chapter 4, those Asians who are older and have higher family income are more likely to register and vote when other variables are controlled. The aggregate-level results comparing the percentage distributions for those who voted to those who did not in the 1992 Presidential election (columns 1 and 2 of Table 6-1) convey a similar, if not a sharper, sociodemographic disparity in turnout. Like the American voters in general, voters of Asian origin tend to be more highly educated, well-off, native-born, older, and living for a longer time in the Southern California community than their nonvoting counterparts. A parallel observation can be made between voting and nonvoting citizens (columns 1 and 3), except that education and income now appear to have stronger relationships to voting than other indicators of sociodemographic background. This differs from the case when noncitizens are involved in the comparison, where length of stay and age have higher Kendall's Tau-C values.

The sociodemographic distinctions involving participation in activities other than voting are much less conspicuous (columns 4 and 5). In fact, the various tests of association indicate that differences in education,

Table 6-1

Percentage Differences Between Asian American Participants and Nonparticipants in terms of Sociodemographic Background

%	Base N	(1) Voting		(3) Other than Voting		(4) (5) (6) (1) - (4)
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		81	140	(73) ^a	54	167
<i>Sociodemographic Background</i>						
Education						
≤ High School		7%	20% (17%)	13%	16%	-6%
≥ College Degree		64	45 (38)	52	52	12
				$\chi^2=11.40$ (12.98*)	$\chi^2=1.09$	df=6
				$t_c=.19^{**}$ (.32**)	$t_c=.02$	
Family Income						
≤ \$20K		5	23 (16)	17	15	-12
≥ \$60K		43	23 (24)	40	27	3
				$\chi^2=22.24^{**}$ (14.89*)	$\chi^2=6.95$	df=6
				$t_c=.25^{**}$ (.28**)	$t_c=.05$	
Unemployment		10	11 (6) n.s. (n.s.)	15	9	-5
Foreign-born		37	61 (47)	50	53	-13
				$\chi^2=11.53^{**}$ (1.44)	n.s.	df=1
Length of Stay						
≤ 5 years		10	27 (12)	15	22	-5
≥ 20 years		53	22 (37)	35	33	18
				$\chi^2=31.14^{**}$ (6.35)	$\chi^2=3.75$	df=6
				$t_c=.38^{**}$ (.19*)	$t_c=.04$	
Male		51	53 (41) n.s. (n.s.)	48	53	3
Age (18-24)		22	31 (28)	23	29	-6
(25-39)		30	45 (41)	42	38	-12
(65+)		11	5 (7)	6	8	5
				$\chi^2=16.99^{**}$ (8.44)	$\chi^2=2.33$	df=5
				$t_c=.24^{**}$ (.19*)	$t_c=.05$	

Source: The Los Angeles Times Poll #318, August 7-10, 1993, released through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

^aEntries in parentheses are those among nonvoting citizens.
*p≤.05 **p≤.005

income, nativity, length of stay, and age do not seem to matter much for participation. However, the higher percentage points of the well-off and the unemployed among the participants also seem to indicate that those having more money or more time may be more likely to participate in activities such as contacting officials, donating money, attending meetings, or volunteering for a political cause. These results both resemble and depart from findings surveying Americans as a whole. Like other Americans, the participation of Asian Americans may be a function of socioeconomic status. Unlike the American participants studied by Verba and his associates (1993a), Asian participants have a closer socioeconomic profile to nonparticipants than voters do to nonvoters.

Some have suspected that nonparticipation in electoral politics may be an indication of political discontent. However, although nonvoters have been found to be more dissatisfied than being uninformed or indifferent (Ragsdale and Rusk 1993) and political discontent may motivate participation in unconventional activities such as sit-ins, boycotts, and protests (Citrin 1977), there has been little empirical evidence that nonvoters are less supportive of democratic ideals or feel more alienated than voters do (Kinder and Sears 1985; Bennett and Resnick 1990). When feelings of alienation and discontent are measured in terms of experiences of discrimination and perceptions of group

deprivation, results in Table 6-2 indicate that Asian voters are more likely to experience some amount of discrimination than nonvoters in the Asian sample. Among citizens, they are also more likely to hear more frequently of racial slurs against the panethnic group and to perceive Asian as the most deprived ethnic group. A slightly different pattern emerges in comparisons involving participation in activities other than voting. Although participants are slightly more likely to hear more frequently of racial slurs² and to perceive group condition as being relatively bad than nonparticipants in the entire sample, they are far more likely to experience discrimination and to be victimized by hate crimes. These seem to suggest that, Asian nonparticipants, particularly in activities other than voting, do not feel more alienated, rather, they have a weaker sense of group consciousness in the aggregate.

The above observation, however, is not equivalent to saying that Asian nonvoters or nonparticipants are more content with the current political or social situation. In fact, when discontent is measured in terms of dissatisfaction with life in the Southern Californian community, the message is to the contrary. Compared to voters, nonvoters, particularly within citizens, express a much higher dissatisfaction with life. Although those who participate through other activities tend to be more dissatisfied than the less active, the between group

Table 6-2

Percentage Differences Between Asian American Participants and Nonparticipants in terms of Minority Group Experience and Information Level

%	Base N	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		Voting Yes	No	Other than Voting Yes	No	(1) - (4)	
		81	140	(73) ^a	54	167	
<i>Minority Group Experience</i>							
Personal Experience of Discrimination							
Great Deal		5%	2% (4%)		7%	7%	-2%
Fair Amount		10	9 (12)		7	10	3
Some Amount		57	47 (45)		63	47	-6
None		28	41 (38)		22	41	6
		$\chi^2=4.61 (2.42)$		$\chi^2=10.57^* \text{ df}=3$			
		$t_c=.13^* (.08)$		$t_c=.15^*$			
Victim of Hate Crime	18	18 (17)		32	13	-14	
		n.s. (n.s.)		$\chi^2=9.46^{**} \text{ df}=1$			
Hear Racial Slurs About Asians							
Very Often		13	11 (8)		13	11	0
Fairly Often		14	15 (13)		19	13	-5
Fairly Infrequent		33	22 (22)		32	24	1
Very Infrequent		41	53 (57)		37	52	4
		$\chi^2=4.00 (4.38)$		$\chi^2=3.69 \text{ df}=3$			
		$t_c=.09 (.16)$		$t_c=.11$			
Group Most Deprived	19	18 (11)		17	19	2	
		n.s. (n.s.)		n.s.			
Group Condition Bad	10	11 (10)		19	8	-9	
		n.s. (n.s.)		$\chi^2=5.38 \text{ df}=3$			
Dissatisfaction	10	19 (25)		19	15	9	
		$\chi^2=3.01 (6.16^*)$		n.s.			
<i>Information Level</i>							
Know Group Leaders	52	30 (30)		39	38	13	
		$\chi^2=10.40^{**} (7.45^{**})$		n.s.			
Know Group History	62	48 (55)		57	52	5	
		$\chi^2=3.96^* (.76)$		n.s.			
Know Internment	92	87 (87)		92	89	0	
		n.s. (n.s.)		n.s.			

Note: (see Table 6-1)

difference does not reach statistical significance. This suggests that most Asian American respondents do not seem to link grievances in personal life with group position in the socio-political system nor, when eligible, seek redress through voting.

Information level may be another factor separating participants from nonparticipants. Many studies have found that nonvoters are more politically ignorant than voters (Bennett and Resnick 1990). This seems to be true with this sample of Asians. A significantly higher percentage of Asian voters can name at least one prominent group political leader than their non-voting counterparts. The gap between voters and nonvoters shrinks sharply, though, in terms of knowing the length of group history and the incidence of Japanese internment in WWII. And nonparticipants do not seem to possess a much lower level of information than participants in activities besides voting. Yet, it is not accurate to characterize non-voter/-participants as ignorant on all matters. More than eight out of ten respondents, including the nonparticipating types, are aware of the internment of Japanese Americans which happened over a half century ago.

Do differences in sociodemographic background, minority group experience, and information level have any bearing on policy preferences? The answer seems to be negative when the opinions of voters are compared to those of nonvoters on

three of the four issues examined (Table 6-3). Within the Asian sample, voters appear to be more supportive of admissions based on racial makeup than merits. Their opinion seems to be more polarized on the issue of banning legal immigration. But the differences are small and do not reach any statistical significance. However, on awarding reparation payments to the Japanese Americans confined in internment camps during World War II, a much higher percentage of voters are more strongly supportive of the policy. Since this issue deals mostly with the interests of a subgroup, the pattern discussed above seems to suggest that voters, being more integrated, may be more likely to link sub-group interests with pan-group interests. Yet, the size of the differences also indicates that policy representation may become an issue when controversies perceived to benefit only one segment of the panethnic community arise.

Conversely, few of the policy preferences of participants in activities besides voting on the four issues can be said to mirror the nonparticipants. On the issue of college admission, participants tend to be more supportive of admissions based on merits than on racial makeup. On banning legal immigration for three years, participants are more likely to oppose the idea. A similar pattern exists regarding the issue of not granting asylum hearings to Chinese boat people, where a much higher percentage of

Table 6-3
 Percentage Differences Between Asian American Participants
 and Nonparticipants in terms of Policy Preferences and Other
 Political Orientations

Policy Preferences	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Voting Yes	No	Other than Voting	Yes	No	(1) - (4)
Base N	81	140	(73) ^a	54	167	
<hr/>						
College Admission						
Admit if qualified	75%	79% (79%)		85%	75%	-10%
Mirror Makeup	24	18 (20)		15	22	9
	$\chi^2=.87 (.39)$			$\chi^2=1.34$		
	$t_c=.05 (.04)$			$t_c=-.08$		
<hr/>						
Ban Legal Immigration						
Favor Strongly	25	19 (26)		14	24	11
Favor Somewhat	20	23 (25)		25	21	-5
Oppose Somewhat	25	31 (28)		21	31	4
Oppose Strongly	30	27 (22)		40	24	-10
	$\chi^2=1.73 (1.51)$			$\chi^2=7.58*$	df=3	
	$t_c=.01 (-.08)$			$t_c=-.14$		
<hr/>						
No Asylum Hearing						
Approve Strongly	40	43 (42)		37	44	3
Approve Somewhat	21	19 (20)		16	21	5
Oppose Somewhat	13	16 (19)		8	17	5
Oppose Strongly	25	22 (20)		39	18	-14
	$\chi^2= .64 (1.06)$			$\chi^2=9.40$	df=3	
	$t_c=-.03 (-.03)$			$t_c=-.12$		
<hr/>						
Award Reparation						
Approve Strongly	73	50 (52)		67	56	6
Approve Somewhat	16	34 (33)		23	29	-7
Oppose Somewhat	3	8 (6)		0	8	3
Oppose Strongly	8	8 (9)		10	8	-2
	$\chi^2=11.37** (7.33)$			$\chi^2=5.11$	df=3	
	$t_c=.20** (.19*)$			$t_c=.08$		
<hr/>						
Political Ideology						
Very Liberal	6	7 (4)		8	6	-2
Somewhat Liberal	20	25 (26)		32	21	-12
Middle	29	28 (36)		21	31	8
Somewhat Conserv.	34	25 (24)		26	29	8
Very Conservative	6	8 (7)		9	7	-3
No Attention	4	6 (3)		4	6	0
	$\chi^2=2.61 (2.54)$			$\chi^2=4.59$	df=5	
	$t_c=.08 (.07)$			$t_c=-.05$		

Table 6-3--Continue

%	Base N	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		Voting Yes	No	Other than Voting	Yes	No	(1) - (4)
<hr/>							
Perceived Vote for Asian Candidates							
Prefer Asian		8	7	(6)	8	7	0
No Difference		60	47	(46)	48	53	12
Uncomfortable		32	47	(48)	44	40	-12
		$\chi^2=4.08 (3.46)$			$\chi^2=.37$ df=2		
		$t_c=.14* (.16)$			$t_c=-.02$		

Note: (see Table 6-1)

participants strongly oppose the refusal. Yet, the distance in the support for reparation between participants and nonparticipants is smaller than that between voter and nonvoters and it is statistically insignificant.

Why is there such a disparity in the representation of issue concerns between voters and participants? Besides what has been discussed earlier that the nature and requirement for voting are different from participation in activities other than voting for many members of this immigrant group, part of the answer may be provided by comparing voters and activists along a number of categories (column 6 of Tables 6-1 to 6-3). In terms of percentage distributions, participants are generally less educated, less well-off, younger, and more likely to be unemployed, foreign-born, and having shorter length of stay than voters. They often experience greater amounts of abuse and discrimination and perceive the group condition as wanting. They are also less able to name group political leaders.

The source of the diversion between the efficacy of issue representation for the two types of participants may also be attributed to the differences in political ideology and perceived vote for Asian candidates. Compared to nonvoters, voters tend to be more conservative and see no difference between Asian candidates and those from other ethnic groups. Those who participated in activities other than voting, on the other hand, tend to be more liberal and

more pessimistic of others' likelihood to vote for Asian candidates when compared either to nonparticipants or to voters. Interestingly, this latter type of opinion pattern is very similar to that of nonvoters, where there is an even larger share of respondents who feel other people are uncomfortable with Asian candidates. The lack of perceived benefit (prospect to win) may be an important factor explaining the lack of voting participation of Asian Americans.³

The Meaning of Participation in a Comparative Perspective

The meaning of Asian American political participation can also be indicated by the uniqueness of policy preferences and political orientations expressed by Asian voters. As shown in Table 6-4, as far as the four issues are concerned, Asian American voters hold a very different policy outlook from voters of other groups. Compared to non-Asian groups, more Asian voters support the admission into college based on qualifications or the awarding of reparations to Japanese Americans, and fewer Asian voters support the proposal to ban legal immigration or send back Chinese boat people without asylum hearing. The greatest difference in opinions occurs between Asian and black voters, particularly on the issue of reparation where 40% more Asian voters support the policy. Smaller differences are found between Asian and Latino voters on the two immigration issues--banning immigration and no asylum

Table 6-4

Percentage Difference Between Voters and Nonvoters in terms of Policy and Other Orientations Across Four Ethnic Groups

<u>College Admission</u>	Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
Admit by Merits	75% (79%) ^a	52% (35%)	44% (33%)	64% (59%)
Mirror Makeup	24 (18)	38 (56)	53 (58)	30 (35)
Neither	1 (2)	10 (9)	3 (10)	7 (6)
N=	79 (125)	71 (106)	89 (40)	438 (175)
	$\chi^2=.87^b$ $t_c=.05$	$\chi^2=5.74^*$ $t_c=-.15^*$	$\chi^2=.61^b$ $t_c=-.07$	$\chi^2=2.05$ $t_c=-.03$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=3.84$	$t_{AB}=4.10$	$t_{AW}=2.36$
<hr/>				
<u>Ban Immigration</u>				
Favor Strongly	25 (19)	32 (29)	54 (50)	47 (45)
Favor Somewhat	20 (23)	22 (21)	24 (21)	15 (19)
Oppose Somewhat	25 (31)	19 (21)	9 (7)	20 (16)
Oppose Strongly	30 (27)	28 (29)	14 (21)	19 (20)
N=	76 (124)	69 (117)	93 (42)	439 (173)
	$\chi^2=1.73$ $t_c=.01$	$\chi^2=.32$ $t_c=.04$	$\chi^2=1.20$ $t_c=.06$	$\chi^2=2.54$ $t_c=.01$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=.94$	$t_{AB}=4.49$	$t_{AW}=3.42$
<hr/>				
<u>No Asylum Hearing</u>				
Approve Strongly	40 (43)	51 (39)	60 (60)	60 (60)
Approve Somewhat	21 (19)	9 (12)	11 (17)	18 (9)
Oppose Somewhat	13 (16)	13 (21)	6 (17)	8 (12)
Oppose Strongly	25 (22)	28 (29)	23 (7)	15 (19)
N=	75 (122)	69 (111)	91 (42)	441 (176)
	$\chi^2=.64$ $t_c=-.03$	$\chi^2=3.21$ $t_c=.09$	$\chi^2=8.75^*$ $t_c=-.04$	$\chi^2=10.73^*$ $t_c=.02$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=.76$	$t_{AB}=1.69$	$t_{AW}=3.29$
<hr/>				

Table 6-4-Continue

		Asian	Latino	Black	Anglo
Favor	Strongly	73% (50%)	44% (39%)	33% (30%)	44% (36%)
Favor	Somewhat	16 (34)	28 (30)	18 (15)	24 (32)
Oppose	Somewhat	3 (8)	13 (15)	14 (15)	12 (14)
Oppose	Strongly	8 (8)	16 (16)	35 (40)	20 (18)
N=		74 (120)	69 (107)	87 (40)	442 (170)
		$\chi^2=11.37^{**}$	$\chi^2=.37$	$\chi^2=.53$	$\chi^2=5.71$
		$t_c=.20^{**}$	$t_c=.04$	$t_c=.06$	$t_c=.04$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=-3.31$	$t_{AB}=-5.86$	$t_{AW}=-4.36$	
<hr/>					
<u>Political Ideology</u>					
Very Liberal		6 (7)	9 (16)	12 (16)	6 (10)
Somewhat Lib.		20 (25)	29 (10)	26 (23)	21 (19)
Middle		29 (28)	29 (24)	32 (26)	30 (32)
Somewhat Cons.		34 (25)	29 (28)	19 (26)	30 (28)
Very Conserv.		6 (8)	4 (14)	10 (5)	13 (9)
No Attention		4 (6)	1 (9)	2 (5)	1 (2)
N=		79 (134)	70 (118)	95 (43)	453 (183)
		$\chi^2=2.61$	$\chi^2=18.49^{**}$	$\chi^2=3.11$	$\chi^2=6.76$
		$t_c=.08$	$t_c=-.04$	$t_c=.05$	$t_c=.06$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=-.82$	$t_{AB}=-1.12$	$t_{AW}=1.24$	
<hr/>					
<u>Perceived Vote for Asian Candidates</u>					
Prefer Asian		8 (7)	3 (8)	5 (5)	3 (4)
No Difference		60 (47)	68 (54)	51 (43)	71 (62)
Uncomfortable		32 (41)	29 (39)	44 (51)	26 (34)
N=		72 (122)	68 (104)	86 (37)	422 (168)
		$\chi^2=4.08$	$\chi^2=3.88$	$\chi^2=1.85^b$	$\chi^2=4.71$
		$t_c=.14^*$	$t_c=.05$	$t_c=.12$	$t_c=.06$
T-test for Group Means		$t_{AL}=.50$	$t_{AB}=1.36$	$t_{AW}=-1.58$	

Source: (see Table 6-1)

^aEntries in parentheses are those of nonvoting respondents including noncitizens.

^bResponse category with the smallest frequency is excluded.

hearing--where t-tests for differences in group mean fail to reject the null hypothesis of no difference. Although the mean of opinions between Anglo and Asian voters differ much across all four issues, Anglo voters most resemble Asian voters in their attitude toward the criterion of college admission. These patterns indicate the prospects and obstacles for the forming of intergroup coalitions.

When the extent of discrepancy in policy opinions between Asian voters and nonvoters is compared to that for each of the three other ethnic groups, there is a striking degree of similarity on the surface. Although Asian voters hold a very different policy outlook from non-Asian voters, both Asian and non-Asian voters differ little from nonvoters in three out of four policy items. This seems to suggest support for the idea that there is no immediate ground for concern over the issue representation of voters. Yet, neither is there a common issue cleavage when concerns of these voters of diverse ethnic background do depart from their nonvoting counterparts.

The issue that divides Asian voters and nonvoters, as discussed earlier, is the rewarding of reparation to Japanese Americans internee. For Latinos, a significant source of division comes from the criterion of college admission. While more voters supported admission on merits, more than half of the nonvoters supported the more affirmative type option. An equal proportion of both black

and Anglo white voters and nonvoters strongly supported the denial of asylum hearings to the Chinese illegal immigrants. Yet, more black voters opposed strongly to the denial of legal procedures than black nonvoters. This again differs from the more disparate pattern for whites. The greatest extent of diversion in issue opinions between voters and nonvoters lies, however, in the opinions of reparation issue among Asians. This implies that Asian American voters (or voters of relatively new immigrant groups), being more likely to hold a different agenda on certain contentious issues from the nonvoting segment of the ethnic community, may have greater opportunity to shape the political discourse in their favor than other more established groups.

The role of Asian American voters in shaping ethnic politics in Southern California can be further clarified by examining the distribution of political ideology and perceived vote for Asian candidates. Compared to voters of other ethnic background, Asians are most similar to Anglos in terms of the distribution of political ideology, though the percentage of the very conservative is higher in Anglos and the percentage of those paying no attention to ideology is highest among Asians. Although about the same percentage of voters in both Asian and Latino groups express a conservative orientation, Latino voters as a group are generally more liberal than Asians. In terms of between-group means, Asians voters, however, do not differ

significantly in ideology from their non-Asian counterparts. Within each group, the ideological difference between voters and nonvoters is also negligible except for the Latinos where nonvoters are decidedly more extreme or ignorant.

On the perception of others' likelihood to vote for Asian candidates, Asian voters did not seem to exert as much confidence in candidates of their own ethnicity as Anglo whites or Latinos do. Although a higher percentage of Asians believed others might prefer Asian candidates, the size is very small. On the other hand, about one third of Asian voters thought others would feel uncomfortable voting for Asians. This is higher than the percentage for Latinos or Anglos. Relatedly, Asian voters trailed only by black voters in terms of the perception of no difference by others between Asian candidates and those of other race/ethnicity. None of the tests for equality of between-group means, however, reaches statistical significance. Another good news here for prospective Asian candidates is that for each group the percentage of no difference is much larger than those stating uncomfortable. Although the perception of voters do not differ significantly from nonvoters in most groups, the diversion is greater within the two newer immigrant groups (i.e., Asians and Latinos).

Summary

Does participation matters for Asians? The answer here can only be tentative because of the limited number of

policy items available. Yet, findings in the chapter suggest that Asian American political participation does matter and it may matter more for Asian Americans--though there are important differences between participation in voting and in other election-related activities. In terms of voting, Asian participants, very much like American voters as a whole, are overrepresented in the higher socioeconomic class and share more of a conservative political ideology. Compared to nonvoters, they have a stronger sense of group consciousness arising from one's being of Asian American ethnicity, but they also express fewer grievances about personal life in Southern California and are more informed about group political leaders. Participants in activities other than voting are more similar in sociodemographic outlook to the nonparticipants. They also share many characteristics of nonvoters. Compared to nonparticipants, they have more experiences of discrimination and are more dissatisfied with life. They are not more informed but hold a very different policy agenda from the less active members. They are the more liberal segment of the Asian sample and, like nonvoters, they feel others are uncomfortable with Asian candidates.

Although Asian voters do not differ much from nonvoters in terms of policy preferences, they are more supportive of awarding reparation to Japanese Americans. Compared to other ethnic groups, the policy preferences of Asian voters

are distinctive and this cannot be readily explained by political ideology. However, the combination of this distinctive policy orientations and the wider diversion between voters and nonvoters indicates that the participation of Asians in the American electoral system may have greater consequences on shaping ethnic politics in their favor. If perceived vote choice has real consequences, more voting participation among Asians also means greater success for Asian candidates.

Comparisons between participants and nonparticipants in terms of their policy attitudes address, nonetheless, partly and indirectly the issue of representation. The selection of issues examined may be a source of bias. Several authors suggest that one may want to examine the policy-relevant context that shapes the needs and benefits of activists such as the circumstances of economic deprivation and dependence upon government programs (Verba et al. 1993a). The meaning of representation in minority politics need also be evaluated by the different policy outcomes for the ethnic communities (Button 1989). Last, investigations ought to be carried out comparing the level of concurrence between views expressed by community leaders and participants (Verba and Nie 1972). These are all possible agendas for future research.

Besides the concern over democratic representation, the values of Asian American participation in American politics

can also be argued in terms of the meanings of the acts themselves. To the extent that political participation is an act in support of government and politics, more integration into the U.S. political system for those with recent immigration background by becoming citizens and voters may help to dissuade the charges of discrimination against immigrants. To the extent that political participation is to influence the selection and/or the actions of government officials, more participation means more chances to succeed in gaining access and clout. Compared to national elections, the effect of more participation for Asians in local elections where turnout is usually very low may also loom larger than the size of the population would indicate (Cavanagh 1991). No matter how one chooses to look, it makes every sense to promote more participation. In the next chapter, I will discuss the role of some institutions to meet this challenge.

Notes

1. The "truth" of this statement is largely attested by comparing the socioeconomic and participation indicators between Asian American citizens and noncitizens in the survey of Southern Californians. Of the three indicators of education, unemployment and family income, the first two do not have significant Pearson Chi-square values at .05 level of significance. Neither do indicators for the extent and the likelihood of participation in activities other than voting between citizens and noncitizens exert any significant difference.
2. The frequency of hearing racial slurs may be a function of the respondent's English language proficiency. Unfortunately, there is no question in the survey to control for this possibility.

3. When this variable was added to the models reported in Chapter 4, both the unstandardized coefficients for Asian American voting among citizens and participation among all respondents were not significant at the .05 level of significance ($P=.37$ for both). However, consistent with the hypothesized direction, the signs are both negative.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The last three decades have witnessed an unprecedented tide of immigration to the United States from Asian and Latin American countries. Renewed concern over the negative impact of immigration increased to such an extent that in California a state ballot in the November 1994 mid-term election (Proposition 187) proposed banning most public assistance to illegal immigrants and their children, despite its possible violation of a federal law mandating public school education to all children residing in the United States, its potentially devastating effect on public health and social stability, and the explicit discriminatory effect which renders in suspect more than one-third of the state's population identified by the 1990 Census as of Asian or Hispanic descent. This is one example of the perilous condition and lack of political clout of the emerging minorities. Focusing on persons originating in Asia, this study has examined the shape, the source, and effect of political participation of Asian Americans as a group and as compared to other ethnic groups in Southern California.

Much removed from the "sojourner" image of early Chinese immigrants, today's Asian Americans are touted as

the "model minority"--a minority group that values family, education, hard work, and has achieved the highest overall level of socioeconomic success among all ethnic groups in recent decades. Yet, this emphasis on the amorphous traditional culture and the aggregated measure of socioeconomic status overlooks the lack of political participation of the multi-ethnic Asian group. The state of today's Asian America is in fact a bifurcated one. Underneath the facade of prosperity is widespread economic diversity among different nationality groups. Behind the impressive record of naturalization is the lack of progress to move up the political integration ladder by registering³ and turning out to vote. Although excessive political campaign contributions by some members of the ethnic community have been reported, gross underrepresentation of Asians exists at every level of government.

What explains the participation patterns of Asian Americans? What are the roles of socioeconomic status and other factors commonly related to political participation for Asians as compared to those for other ethnic groups? To the extent that a pan-ethnic group consciousness is valid and viable for Asians, this study asks whether and how much pan-ethnic identity matters for political participation. Additionally, by comparing the meanings of pan-ethnic and specific-ethnic group identity, using Korean Americans as an

example, the study advances our understanding of the dynamics between ethnicity and political participation.

What follows is a summary of major findings from analyzing the two Los Angeles Times surveys used in this study:

1. In contrast to Latinos or African Americans, Asian Americans evidence a participation deficit that cannot be explained away by the differences in socioeconomic status, demographic background, socio-psychological attitudes, and legal restraints between Anglo whites and Asians. Indeed, the turnout and participation patterns of Asians become more of a puzzle when only socioeconomic status is controlled. Asian (pan)ethnicity does seem to matter for political participation. Yet, within the Asian sample, one's national origin has no impact on the probability of registration, voting, or the extent of participation in activities other than voting. Being a Korean American in Los Angeles after the Rodney King Riot of 1992, on the other hand, does have a positive influence on the likelihood of practicing some form of election-related activities besides voting.

2. Although socioeconomic status is not useful to predict the participation of Asian Americans when compared to other ethnic groups, those Asian American citizens with a higher family income have a greater likelihood to register or to vote than those who have not. An Asian American's income, education, and employment status cannot, however,

shed any light on one's likelihood or the extent of participation in activities other than voting. Neither can it explain the political integration for a sample of Korea-born Americans in Los Angeles. Perhaps because of the interaction of both a relatively brief immigration history for a majority of the current group members and their high socioeconomic achievement, the influence of socioeconomic factors for Asians is obviously much weaker when compared to other more established groups.

3. Similarly, the influence of demographic factors on political participation is comparatively weak for Asians. Yet, like the majority of Americans, being older can also increase the probability of registration or voting among Asian American citizens. Length of stay, though weaker than age in predicting participation for Asians in general, is the single most powerful determinant of participation for Korea-born Americans. And gender becomes an issue when Korean American women are found to participate at a lower rate than their male co-ethnics even after controlling for several areas of differences.

4. The construction of ethnicity either cast at the pan-group level or at the specific-group level involves multi-dimensional processes. A model incorporating socio-psychological measures associated with these processes, though not sufficient to compensate for the participation disparity between Asians and Anglo white Americans, is most

useful of all models to explain turnout or other participation among Asians. Being concerned over group status, perceiving Asians as the most deprived group, and giving support to intermarriage can increase citizens' likelihood to vote. Being victimized by hate crimes in the post-Rodney King era alone can increase the probability and the extent of participation in other activities. Among the Korea-born Asians, being more acculturated and supportive of intermarriage indicate more integration, whereas being detached from the mainstream can decrease the extent of participation in the U.S. political system.

5. Although voters--regardless of their ethnic origins--do not differ much from nonvoters in their policy preferences, the nature of low or no participation and its implications on policy representation are different for Asians than for other groups. It matters if Asians participate. Because Asian voters have a different outlook and policy preferences from those who practice a more active approach to influence politics, it also matters how one participates.

Mainstream political science methodology provides these answers to the questions of Asian American political participation both comparatively and internally. The results present for the first time a comprehensive picture of the dynamics between Asian American ethnicity and

electoral participation at three levels--across panethnic groups, inside the pan-Asian group, and within a specific Asian nationality group. Yet, judging from the persistent and negative coefficients for the Asian variable, the study, like two other studies on the same subject (i.e., Uhlauer, Cain, and Kiewiet 1989; Leighley and Vedlitz, 1994), fails to locate a generalized model of political participation for the four major ethnic groups in the United States. From the large number of insignificant variables in the Asian models, particularly those predicting participation beyond voting, studying the political behavior of Asians with factors commonly related to the political participation of mainstream Americans produces a less than satisfying model of participation.

On the one hand, the lack of "significant" findings may be a function of the omission of important variables which cannot be included in the analysis. Instances of such omission that have been found to influence ethnic participation include but are not limited to political party affiliation, internal political efficacy and sense of civic duty, ethnic and nonethnic group membership, prior socialization experiences, and exposure to mainstream and ethnic media. It is also possible that the analyses fail to take into account certain systemic forces that work disproportionately against the group such as in the lack of Asian dominant electoral districts and Asian candidates to

provide meaningful political competition and choices as well as insufficient efforts by political parties and other agents of mobilization to establish the perception among Asian Americans of the democratic linkage between people and government.

On the other hand, the lack of "significant" findings underscores the unique patterns of the Asian American political participation where even null findings have great implications for the source, shape, and impact of Asian participation. We learn, for instance, that the political activism of the pan-Asian community is not decided by any specific difference in immigration generation, length of stay, gender, income, education, employment status, or, for the most part, national origin, when other conditions are equal. We also learn that citizenship and voter registration requirements, though effectively blocking a significant portion of Asians from turning out to vote, are not by themselves decisive in the probability and extent of participation in activities other than voting among Asians.

Among a specific group of Asians, the Korean Americans, we learn that none of the indicators of socioeconomic status, age, and place of education is a source of the different extent of political integration. Similar to an earlier study of Asians in general, attachment to ethnic group culture does not depress participation into the U.S. political system (Lien, 1994). This is another evidence

that pluralism, rather than assimilation, characterizes the American political culture. And different from previous conceptions (Hurh and Kim 1984; Kim 1981), affiliation with a Korean American Protestant church does not have any independent influence on naturalization and voter registration. In this survey conducted on the eve of the Rodney King Riot, we also learn that some factors hypothesized to shape ethnic group identity, such as perception of group deprivation and experience of personal discrimination, are not significant in influencing political integration for this group of recent arrivals. Conversely, in a later survey (of Asians in Southern California), discriminatory experience can increase participation in activities other than voting and perceived deprivation is found to have positive effect on citizens' voting. This underscores once again the central role of socio-political context in shaping the character and impact of ethnic group identity on political participation.¹

Taken as a whole, the significant and the null findings both reflect the fluidity of the roles of ethnic group identity, socioeconomic status, and demographic background in shaping Asian American political participation. Depending on the state of the mobilization environment, the scope of the conception of ethnicity, and the form of participatory activities, a different model of political participation is construed. This revelation fits well with

what has been observed by V.O. Key that "[t]he voice of the people is but an echo" (1966, 2). Political attitudes solicited through public opinion surveys therefore "constitute a reaction to political stimuli of a structural nature" (Cavanagh 1991, 96, emphasis original). And political participation is partly the product of the strategic mobilization by political parties, interest groups, and government elites (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Because of the prime importance of political context in determining the impact of individual resources on political participation, the remaining space of this chapter offers a preliminary examination of the roles of some mobilization agents that affect the shape of Asian American political participation over time.² They are, specifically, political parties, ethnic community organizations, and ethnic media. These are institutions that make links between individuals and the polity. For persons with recent immigration history, they are also agents of (re)socialization. It is hoped that the discussion will unfold some problems and prospects for the future of the Asian American electoral participation.

Political parties. In this pluralistic democracy, both political parties and immigrant groups have good reasons to become cordial bedfellows. As an institution aiming to win elections, political parties need immigrants to expand the electorate, particularly where competition is high. As the

principal agency of interest aggregation (Pomper 1980), parties are ideal institutions for protecting and advancing the interests of minority groups (Middleton 1991).

Historically, immigrant groups identified and relied upon parties as their gateway to the American political process (Levy and Kramer, 1973). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, party organizations in many large cities of the East and Midwest were eager to exchange services for votes. In fact, many political jurisdictions allowed non-citizens to vote prior to the 1920s when naturalization and voter registration were both under state jurisdiction. Parties was a powerful institutional force for the political incorporation of immigrants.

Yet, recruiting potential immigrant--particularly Asian--voters and candidates is not a major activity of today's party organizations in California. The main reason for this is that the resources of parties have been severely reduced because of the many state-wide changes after the successful campaign to eradicate corruption and fraud by the Progressive Movement (Lawson 1980; Schmidt 1992). A related reason is that the political inclination of Asians which tends to be more independent and divided between the two parties discourages parties from investing their limited resources in efforts to mobilize Asians. This problem is aggravated by the current situation when the mobilization of Asian immigrant groups usually requires vast sums of money

to prepare and distribute specialized mailers in more than several major languages and to gain access to the various ethnic media. The lack of attachment of Asians to either political party, however, can be partly attributed to the lack of hospitality or even antagonism from both parties in the earlier part of Asian American history (Wei 1993). Even though the situation has since changed from 1976 when Jimmy Carter and Jesse Jackson tried to bring in Asian American support to their Presidential bids, it is probably fair to say that parties are more interested in getting money from than developing votes in the Asian American community, particularly on the Republican side.

It would be erroneous, however, to dismiss the influence of political parties on Asian participation. At the individual level, stronger affiliation with parties indicates greater likelihood to turnout to vote (Uhlanner 1991; Lien 1994). As an institution, political party provides a means of transformation for radicals to switch their strategies from protests to electoral politics. By the early 1970s, Wang (1991) noted that Asian American activists began to promote ethnic group concerns through local partisan organizations such as the Chinese American Democratic and Republican Clubs in San Francisco. Over time, they also participated through ethnic-based organizations such as Japanese American Democratic Club, Nisei Voters League, Korean American Political Association,

Filipino American Democratic Club, Vietnamese American Democratic Club, and Asian American Republican Association. Lack of proper funding, man power, and stable organizational support from the state or national parties often limit the effectiveness of these local groups.

Ethnic community organizations. Like political parties, ethnic political organizations have a strong interest in trying to recruit members and to socialize and mobilize them for political actions. Depending on the major functions of the organizations, membership in or identification with an ethnic organization may signify support for collective action against economic and political deprivation and cultural discrimination in the new World. It may gesture support for the preservation of specific ethnic group culture and values. It may indicate the development of common professional interests. Or, it may suggest solidarity with the old World political machine. These are some of the functions performed by this variegated corps and they are not necessarily exclusive of each other.

Contrary to the political parties, ethnic organizations do not appear to be in decline. Instead, observers noted a sharp rise in the number of ethnic group-specific and pan-ethnic organizations since the 1960s. Of them, many have played a pivotal role in the development of the Asian American Movement by organizing protests and demonstrations or by bringing in federally-funded social service agencies

to the ethnic community. Dominated by middle-class, native-born college students or professionals, these new organizations disrupted the community power structures and group boundaries coordinated by such traditional organizations as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and the Japanese American Citizens League (Wong 1982; Kwong 1987). Although the presence of these progressive organizations have increased the amount of internal division and strife within the Asian community, the dependency on outside funding which rewarded unity also encouraged the consolidation of diverse nationality groups on a pan-Asian basis and promoted the development of a pan-Asian American group consciousness (Espiritu 1992).

Given the low electoral participation of the Asians, panethnic community organizations often are sought for by outsiders and relied upon by insiders to voice concerns for the divergent community. An observer noted that "[t]he organizational structure of the Asian American population has become increasingly elaborate and dense, with links being forged within and among Asian American groups as well as with non-Asian constituencies" (Espiritu 1992, 69). Following the end of the Civil Rights era when the external environment called for a change to survive, many community organizations have shifted their strategies and goals from protests to elections, from radicalism to reforms, from anti-War to lobbying and networking, and from raising

consciousness to engaging in leadership training (Nakanishi 1985-1986; Wei 1993). With the apparent weakness of the political parties, ethnic organizations have been encouraged to participate more in the political process by working independently of or together with partisan organizations to recruit candidates, raise campaign funds, issue community concerns, create Asian voting districts, register voters, and get out the vote. However, their influences can be negated by the criticisms over representation as well as by common organizational problems such as the instability in economic resource, membership, personnel, and frequent conflicts over strategies and goals.

Ethnic Media. Similar to ethnic community organizations, ethnic media are brokers that serve the dual role of ethnic maintenance and acculturation. The socialization role of the media is well documented in literature (Chaffee and Yang 1990). For a group of Korean immigrants in California, exposure to U.S. and Korean media were the most consistent predictors of both political knowledge and discussions, outstripping formal education and social contacts (Chaffee, Nass, and Yang 1990). Ethnic media, because of their focus on homeland and specific-ethnic community affairs and reporting in their own languages, are often relied upon to sustain ethnic cultures and sentiments. By being subject to strong pressures from the home governments, many traditional ethnic media have

served to reinforce political loyalty to the homeland (Kim 1981; Kwong 1987).

However, according to Espiritu (1992), many ethnic media have also been responsible for identity and community building in the on-going Asian American Movement since the late 1960s. She noted that while the traditional ethnic press still held power, many pan-Asian periodicals such as *Gidra* and *Amerasia Journal* were founded by college students in the name of self-empowerment to address the overlooked issues of civil rights and the war in Vietnam. Over time, many of the radical publications have been replaced by slicker "bourgeois" journalism, but some single-ethnic newspapers have also broadened their scope to address the concerns of the pan-Asian community. Because of their ability to simultaneously maintain ethnic attachment, promote acculturation, and raise group consciousness, ethnic media are expected to continue playing a central and bridging role in mobilizing the political participation of Asian Americans.

In sum, an evaluation of the three mobilization agents suggests that, beneath the relative passivity in electoral politics, there is an undercurrent of political activism evident in the thriving organizational life of the Asian American community despite negligence by the mainstream institutions and interference from homeland governments. Ethnic-community oriented or organized reactions to recent

events such as anti-Asian violence, biased college admission policy, English-only initiative, and discriminatory immigration legislation also suggest that it is possible to conceive a pan-Asian identity, transcending the internal divisions over class, culture, generation, and national origin. In the long run, these ethnic community and party organizations may provide the best hope to translate the rich socioeconomic resources accumulated either before or after coming to the States into political assets. However, the current extent of mobilization by these organizations remains an open question. An immediate agenda in research is to survey the entire community and identify the most influential mobilizing organizations. Given that organizational membership in voluntary associations is the most powerful predictor of political participation (Verba and Nie 1972), the next step is to identify the percent of individuals affiliated with or feeling close to these organizations. Only through these investigations can we finally begin to reach a fuller understanding of the political participation of Asian America.

Notes

1. The differential impact of discriminatory experiences on different types of political participation in the two surveys may also accentuate the necessity to investigate in the future the meanings of various participatory forms for different population segments of Asians.
2. By recognizing the primacy of the environment, this study does not take the position that individual behavior can only be influenced by changes in the environment. Rather, the direction of influence can go both ways.

APPENDIX A
VOTING AND REGISTRATION IN THE ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 1992

N (x1000)	Asian ^a 5,129	Latino ^b 14,688	Black 21,039	White ^c 157,837
CITIZENSHIP	55%	60%	95%	95%
REGISTRATION	31 (57) ^d	35 (59)	64	70
among Male	32 (58)	32 (56)	61	69
among Female	31 (56)	38 (60)	66	71
among College Grad.+	39 (69)	60 (82)	81	88
among Age 45+	40 (65)	46 (69)	73	78
VOTING	27 (50)	29 (48)	54	64
among Male	28 (51)	27 (47)	51	63
among Female	27 (49)	31 (49)	57	65
among College Grad.+	36 (63)	56 (77)	77	84
among Age 45+	37 (59)	40 (59)	65	72
SELECTED SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS				
Male	47 (47)	50 (47)	45	48
College Graduate+	35 (36)	8 (10)	11	21
Age 45+	36 (41)	30 (34)	37	44

Source: Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 466

^aAsian or Pacific Islanders. All populations referred to in this table are those of age 18 or over.

^bHispanic-origin persons. They can be of any race.

According to results of the March 1992 CPS, about 95.2% of Hispanic-origin persons are of white race.

^cSome Whites may be of Hispanic origin. Results of March 1992 CPS indicate that about one tenth of Whites are of Hispanic origin.

^dPercentages in parenthesis are those among citizens.

APPENDIX B
A COMPARISON OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF ASIAN AMERICANS
FROM FOUR SOURCES

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SOURCE	1984 Sample ^a	1993 Sample	1990 Census	1992 CPS
COVERAGE	California	Six counties in S. California	Los Angeles County, CA	Nation
Asian N=	308	221	929 ^b	5,129 ^b
% Asian	19	18	11	3
% Citizenship	65	70	56	55
% Foreign-born	57	52	70	
% College Degree or more (among those age 25+)	39	47	38	35
% Family Income (50K or more)	27 ^c	39	38	30
% Male	60	52	49	47
% Age 45+	25	22		36
% Chinese	22	25	27	
% Japanese	23	21	14	
% Korean	29	10	15	
% Filipino	16	18	24	
% Vietnamese	4	13	7	
% Registration	55 (77) ^d	47 (68)		31 (57)
% Voting	48 (69)	37 (53)		27 (50)

^a Information on the 1984 sample is taken from a 1984 California Ethnicity Survey Conducted by Bruce Cain and others and made available to the author through the University of California Institute of Social Science Research.

^b Numbers are in thousands. The Los Angeles County figures are for Asians only, Pacific Islanders are excluded from the analysis. Unlike most of the figures for column 1, 2, and 4, which were calculated among those age 18 and over, most of the figures for the LA County were calculated among the entire population.

^c Those with a family income of 40K or more.

^d Figures in parentheses are those among citizens.

APPENDIX C

A COMPARISON OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN AMERICANS
IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY TO THE 1990 CENSUS

	1992 Sample	1990 Census
% Citizenship	36	45
% Foreign-born	99	82
% College Degree or more (among those age 25+)		
	49	34
% Family Income (50K or more)	31	29
% Female	51	46 ^a
% Registration	18(51) ^b	

^a This percentage is calculated among those age 16 and over.

^b The percentage in parenthesis is that among citizens.

APPENDIX D
QUESTION WORDING FOR THE SURVEYS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIANS
AND OF KOREANS IN LOS ANGELES

(S=Southern Californian Survey; K=Korean Survey)

I. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

SK. Registration (asked of respondents who are citizens) "Some people are registered to vote and other people are not. Do you know for sure if your name is presently recorded in the voter registration book of the Election District where you now live? [IF YES] Are you registered in a political party, or have you declined to be registered in any specific party--that is to say, are you an Independent? [IF REGISTERED IN A PARTY] Which party is that?"

S. Voting (asked of those who are registered to vote) "Sometimes it happens that people don't get to vote in every single election. Did you vote for President this past November, or did something prevent you from voting, or did you choose not to vote? (IF VOTED) Who did you vote for: Bill Clinton, the Democrat, or George Bush, the Republican, or Ross Perot, the independent, or did you vote for someone else?"

S. Participation Other than Voting (asked of everyone) "Some people participate in politics and some people do not. During the past four years, have you participated in any type of political activity in your community? For example, have you written or phoned a government official, or donated money to a political campaign, or attended a political function or volunteered for a political cause or have you done something else or don't you participate in politics?" (Accept up to four replies)

SK. Citizenship "Are you a citizen of the United States, or not?"

K. Citizenship Intent (asked of noncitizens) "Do you expect to become a citizen of the United States in the next few years, or not?"

II. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

SK. Education "What is the highest grade of regular school or college that you finished and got credit for? (IF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE) After graduating from high school, did you complete some technical training like secretarial school, art school, or trade school, or something like that?"

K. Place of Education "Were you educated mainly in Korea, mainly in the United States or were you educated in both

places?"

SK. Family Income "If you added together the yearly incomes of all the members of your family living at home last year, would the total of all their incomes be less than \$20,000 ... or more than \$40,000 ... or somewhere in between? (IF LESS THAN \$20,000) Would the total of all their incomes be less than \$10,000? (IF IN-BETWEEN) Would the total of all their incomes be less than \$30,000 or more than \$30,000? (IF MORE THAN \$40,000) Would the total of all their incomes be between \$40,000 and \$50,000 ... or between \$50,000 and \$60,000 ... or more than that?"

SK. Employment "What were you doing most of last week: working full-time, or working part-time, or were you self-employed, or keeping house, or going to school, or are you looking for work, or retired, or what? (IF ILL, ON VACATION, OR ON STRIKE, RECORD AS 'WORKING.') IF LOOKING FOR WORK, ASK) Have you looked for a full- or a part-time job in the past four weeks?" (IF YES, RECORD AS 'LOOKING FOR WORK.') IF NO, RECORD AS 'NOT LOOKING FOR WORK.')

SK. Age "How old were you on your last birthday?

S. Age Group Well, does your age fall between 18-21, or 22-24, or 25-39, or 40-44, or 45-64, are you older than that?"

S. Length of Residence/Years of Stay "Have you lived all your life in Southern California, or not? (IF NO) Well, how long have you lived in Southern California?"

K. _____ "How many years have you lived in the United States on a permanent basis?"

S. Immigration Generation "Were you born outside of the United States or not? (IF NO) Were either or both of your parents born outside of the United States, or not?"

K. Immigration Generation/Nationality "In what country were you born? (IF BORN IN THE UNITED STATES, ASK) Were you born in California or in some other part of the United States?"

S. Race/Ethnicity "What is your race: Is it white, or black, or Asian, or do you consider yourself of some other race?" and "Are you, yourself, or Latino or Hispanic descent--for example Mexican, or Puerto Rican, or Cuban, or some other Spanish background--or are you not?"

S. Asian Country of Origin "What country in Asia are you or your ancestors from?"

III. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

A. Group Consciousness

S. Own Group Most Deprived "Which group, if any, do you think suffers the most discrimination in your community these days? Is there another group which you feel suffers almost as much discrimination?"

S. Group Condition Bad "How about [one of the four ethnic groups] in Southern California and their ability to get adequate housing, and education, and job opportunities and things like that? Generally speaking, do you think conditions for [same ethnic group as mentioned above] in

Southern California are very good, or good, or bad, or very bad?"

K. Relative Group Condition "How would you rate the situation for Koreans relative to other minorities in Southern California such as blacks and Latinos: do you think Koreans are generally better off, or are they worse off or are they in just about the same situation as other minorities?"

S. Racial Discrimination a Problem "How big a problem is racial discrimination in your community? Is it a major problem, a moderate-sized problem, a minor problem or not a problem at all?"

K. Primary Barrier for Group "What do you think is the primary thing holding Koreans back in Southern California: is it racism and discrimination, or the language barrier, or lack of interest in getting involved in mainstream society, or cultural differences or lack of adequate job training or something else?"

S. Personal Experience of Discrimination "During the time you've lived in Southern California, have you personally been discriminated against a great deal, a fair amount, some but not much, or not at all?"

K. _____ "Because you are Korean, have you personally been discriminated against a great deal, a fair amount, some but not much, or practically not at all during the time you've lived in Southern California?"

SK. Ways Discriminated (asked of those being discriminated against) "In which of these ways, if any, have you experienced discrimination during the time you've lived in Southern California: in jobs or promotion, in education, in housing, in dealing with a government agency, in dealing with a business or retail establishment, from your neighbors, from strangers in a public place or in some other way? Is there another way you've experienced discrimination?"

S. Victim of Hate Crime "Have you ever been the victim of a 'hate crime' in Southern California, that is, have you had someone verbally or physically abuse you, or damage your property, specifically because you belong to a certain race or ethnic group?"

K. _____ "In the past few years, have you ever been verbally or physically abused by a non-Korean, or not? (IF YES, ASK:) Were racial differences a reason for any of those conflicts, or was race not a factor in any of those conflicts?"

S. Hear Racial Slurs about Asians "How often would you say you hear racial slurs about Asians made by the people you come in contact with? Do you hear them very often, fairly often, fairly infrequently or very infrequently?"

S. Know Asian American Leaders "Right now, who do you think is the most prominent American of Asian background?"

S. Know Asian American History "To the best of your

knowledge, when did the first Asians settle in California: about 25 years ago or about 50 years ago or about 100 years ago?"

S. Know Internment of Japanese Americans "To the best of your knowledge, during World War II, did the U.S. government gather up American citizens of Japanese descent and place them in internment camps because of fear they were security risks, or not?"

S. Support Reparation "The United States government has recently awarded reparation payments to the Japanese-Americans whom it did confine in internment camps during World War II. Do you favor or oppose the idea of awarding reparations to those people? (IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE) Do you (favor/oppose) that strongly or (favor/oppose) that somewhat?"

S. (Dis)satisfaction with Life "All things considered, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied these days with the community in which you live? Are you entirely (satisfied/dissatisfied), or mostly (satisfied/dissatisfied), or are you somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied) these days with the community in which you live?"

B. Acculturation/Integration

S. Cross-racial friendship "Thinking for a moment of blacks, whites, Latinos and Asians, do you yourself know any person of another race whom you consider a close personal friend or not?"

K. _____ "Are any of your friends white, or black, or Latino or non-Korean Asian or what?"

SK. Interracial Marriage "Would you approve or disapprove if someone in your family married a person of a different racial or ethnic background than yours-- or wouldn't you care about that one way or the other? (IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE) Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or (approve/disapprove) somewhat?"

K. English Fluency "How well do you speak English: very well, or just well, or not well, or not at all?"

K. Speaking with Whites "In an average week, how many white people do you talk to: over twenty-five, between ten and twenty-five, between five and ten, between one and five or don't you talk to any white people in an average week?"

K. Religious Affiliation "Are you currently a member of a particular religious parish or congregation that has your name on its registers or that you support with contributions, or not?"

K. Language Use "In your everyday life, do you speak Korean exclusively, mostly Korean, Korean and English equally, mostly English or do you speak English exclusively?"

K. Media Use "Are the periodicals you read and the broadcasts you listen to exclusively Korean, mostly Korean, about half-Korean and half English or mostly English or

mostly English or English exclusively?"

K. Business Contacts "Are your business and financial transactions conducted exclusively with Koreans, mostly with Koreans, about half with Korean and half with non-Koreans, with mostly non-Koreans or with non-Koreans exclusively?"

C. Attachment to Ethnic Culture

K. Preserve Korean Culture "How important is it to preserve Korean culture for future generations of Koreans in America? Is it very important, or fairly important, or not very important, or hardly important at all?"

K. Expect to return to Korea "Generally speaking, where do you expect you and your children will end up living in the years to come: in Korea, in California, somewhere in the United States other than California or elsewhere?"

K. Koreans in Neighborhood "How would you describe the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood where you live? Would you say it is mostly white, or mostly black, or mostly Latino, or mostly Korean, or is it mostly non-Korean Asian, or is it mostly some other ethnic/racial group, or would you say the racial and/or ethnic makeup is pretty evenly mixed?"

K. Importance of Koreatown "How important is Koreatown in Los Angeles to you personally as a business, cultural and social center: is it the most important place to you, one of many important places, not as important as other places or not important to you at all?"

IV. POLICY PREFERENCES AND OTHER POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS

S. College Admission "As you may know, Asians make up about 10 percent of California's population but they comprise about 28 percent of the students in the University of California system. Which of these statements comes closer to your view about that: 'If Asians are better qualified, more of them should be admitted to college than others.' or 'Despite qualifications, the racial makeup in colleges should generally mirror the population as a whole.'"

S. Ban Immigration "Some people have proposed that all LEGAL foreign immigration to the U.S. be stopped for a period of 3 years. Do you favor or oppose that proposal? (IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE) Do you (favor/oppose) that strongly or (favor/oppose) that somewhat?"

S. Asylum Hearing "As you may know, several hundred Chinese nationals recently attempted to land their boats in California in order to seek asylum in this country. The U.S. Coast Guard and Mexico intercepted the boats before they entered American waters and the Chinese were returned to their homeland without their cases being heard by the U.S. government. Do you approve of the decision to send the Chinese boat people back to their homeland without hearings or do you think the U.S. should have agreed to hear each person's case for asylum? (IF APPROVE OR FEEL EACH SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN HEARING) Do you feel strongly or not strongly

about that?"

S. Support Reparation "The United States government has recently awarded reparation payments to the Japanese-Americans whom it did confine in internment camps during World War II. Do you favor or oppose the idea of awarding reparations to those people? (IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE) Do you (favor/oppose) that strongly or (favor/oppose) that somewhat?

S. Political Ideology "How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics? Do you generally think of yourself as very liberal, or somewhat liberal, or middle-of-the-road, or somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

S. Perceived Vote for Asian Candidates "How do you think most people you know would feel about voting for an Asian-American for political office? Do you think they would be favorably disposed to that, or would that make them uncomfortable, or would that not make a difference to them one way or the other?

APPENDIX E
THE KOREAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON INTER-GROUP RELATIONS
IN LOS ANGELES, FEBRUARY-MARCH 1992

Overall, how would you rate relations between Koreans and other races and ethnic groups in Southern California these days: excellent, good, not so good or poor?

EXCELLENT 4% GOOD 31% NOT GOOD 58%

Do you think race relations between Koreans and other groups living in Southern California are getting better, getting worse or staying about the same?

BETTER 39% WORSE 19% SAME 34% NOT SURE 8%

Who or what do you think is primarily responsible for the conflicts which have been occurring between blacks and Koreans?

BLACKS 16% KOREANS 15% BOTH 53%

Do you think the news media have exaggerated the amount of conflict between Koreans and blacks in Southern California, or have they underplayed the amount of conflict or have the media given that conflict the right amount of attention?

EXAGGERATED 78% UNDERPLAYED 5% RIGHT AMOUNT 18%

What's the most important problem facing Southern California today? Is there another problem that is almost as urgent?
(ACCEPTED UP TO TWO REPLIES)

RECESSION 38% CRIME 37% RACISM/RACIAL TENSIONS 18% DRUGS 13%

All things considered, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way your life is going these days? Are you entirely (satisfied/dissatisfied) or mostly (satisfied/dissatisfied) or are you somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied) with the way your life is going these days?

SATISFIED 74% NEUTRAL 15% DISSATISFIED 9%

How do you think most blacks/Latinos you come in contact with feel about you? Do you think most of them like you, or dislike you, or do you think most of them neither like nor dislike you?

(Blacks)

NO CONTACT 16% LIKE 34% DISLIKE 9% NEITHER 32% NOT SURE 9%

(Latinos)

NO CONTACT 10% LIKE 47% DISLIKE 5% NEITHER 28% NOT SURE 10%

Generally speaking, do you think Koreans feel least favorably toward whites, blacks or Latinos or non-Korean Asians or toward no group in particular?

NO GROUP 18% WHITES 9% BLACKS 64% LATINOS 8% NK ASIAN 1%

In an average week, how many black people do you talk to: over twenty-five, between ten and twenty-five, between five and ten, between one and five or don't you talk to any black people in an average week?

OVER 25 14% 10-25 6% 5-10 11% 1-5 30% NONE 40%

In an average week, how many Latino people do you talk to:

OVER 25 20% 10-25 10% 5-10 14% 1-5 31% NONE 25%

Are any of your friends white, or black, or Latino, or non-Korean Asians or what?

NONE 36% WHITE 50% BLACK 2% LATINO 5% NK/ASIAN 7%

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Pei-te Lien was born March 24, 1957, in Taiwan, the Republic of China. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the National Taiwan University in 1979. Later in the year, she came to the United States to study telecommunications at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

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